

New Series,
No. 183.

BEADLE'S

Old Series
No. 504.

NEW DIME NOVELS



Alice Wilde.

Popular Dime Hand-Books.

BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.

Each volume 100 12mo. pages, sent post-paid on receipt of price—ten cents each.

STANDARD SCHOOL SERIES.

DIME SPEAKERS.

1. Dime American Speaker.
2. Dime National Speaker.
3. Dime Patriotic Speaker.
4. Dime Comic Speaker.
5. Dime Elocutionist.
6. Dime Humorous Speaker.
7. Dime Standard Speaker.
8. Dime Stump Speaker.
9. Dime Juvenile Speaker.
10. Dime Spread-eagle Speaker.
11. Dime Debater and Chairman's Guide.
12. Dime Exhibition Speaker.
13. Dime School Speaker.
14. Dime Ludicrous Speaker.
15. Carl Pretzel's Komikal Speaker.
16. Dime Youth's Speaker.
17. Dime Eloquent Speaker.
18. Dime Hail Columbia Speaker.
19. Dime Serio-omie Speaker.
20. Dime Select Speaker.

Dime Melodist. (Music and Words.)
School Melodist. (Music and Words.)

DIME DIALOGUES.

- Dime Dialogues Number One.
- Dime Dialogues Number Two.
- Dime Dialogues Number Three.
- Dime Dialogues Number Four.
- Dime Dialogues Number Five.
- Dime Dialogues Number Six.
- Dime Dialogues Number Seven.
- Dime Dialogues Number Eight.
- Dime Dialogues Number Nine.
- Dime Dialogues Number Ten.
- Dime Dialogues Number Eleven.
- Dime Dialogues Number Twelve.
- Dime Dialogues Number Thirteen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Fourteen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Fifteen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Sixteen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Seventeen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Eighteen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Nineteen.
- Dime Dialogues Number Twenty.
- Dime Dialogues Number Twenty-one.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERIES.

- 1—**DIME GENTS' LETTER-WRITER**—Embracing Forms, Models, Suggestions and Rules for the use of all classes, on all occasions.
- 2—**DIME BOOK OF ETIQUETTE**—For Ladies and Gentlemen: being a Guide to True Gentility and Good-Breeding, and a Directory to the Usages of society.
- 3—**DIME BOOK OF VERSES**—Comprising Verses for Valentines, Mottoes, Couplets, St. Valentine Verses, Bridal and Marriage Verses, Verses of Love, etc.
- 4—**DIME BOOK OF DREAMS**—Their Romance and Mystery; with a complete interpreting Dictionary. Compiled from the most accredited sources.
- 5—**DIME FORTUNE-TELLER**—Comprising the art of Fortune-Telling, how to read Character, etc.
- 6—**DIME LADIES' LETTER-WRITER**—Giving the various forms of Letters of School Days, Love and Friendship, of Society, etc.
- 7—**DIME LOVERS' CASKET**—A Treatise and Guide to Friendship, Love, Courtship and Marriage. Embracing also a complete Floral Dictionary, etc.
- 8—**DIME BALL-ROOM COMPANION**—And Guide to Dancing. Giving rules of Etiquette, hints on Private Parties, toilettes for the Ball-room, etc.
- 9—**BOOK OF 100 GAMES**—Out-door and In-door SUMMER GAMES for Tourists and Families in the Country, Picnics, etc., comprising 100 Games, Forfeits, etc.
- 10—**DIME CHESS INSTRUCTOR**—A complete hand-book of instruction, giving the entertaining mysteries of this most interesting and fascinating of games.
- 11—**DIME BOOK OF CROQUET**—A complete guide to the game, with the latest rules, diagrams, Croquet Dictionary, Parlor Croquet, etc.
- 12—**DIME BOOK OF BEAUTY**—A delightful book, full of interesting information. It deserves a place in the hands of every one who would be beautiful.
- DIME ROBINSON CRUSOE**—In large octavo, double columns, illustrated.

FAMILY SERIES.

1. DIME COOK BOOK.
2. DIME RECIPE BOOK.
3. DIME HOUSEWIFE'S MANUAL.

4. DIME FAMILY PHYSICIAN.
5. DIME DRESSMAKING AND LINERY.

The above books are sold by Newsdealers everywhere, or will be sent, paid, to any address, on receipt of price, 10 cents each. BEADLE & Publishers, 98 William Street, New York.

ALICE WILDE;

THE RAFTSMAN'S DAUGHTER.

A FOREST ROMANCE.

BY MRS. M. V. VICTOR,

AUTHOR OF DIME NOVEL No. 448, "THE TWO HUNTERS."

NEW YORK:
BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,
No. 98 WILLIAM STREET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1890, by
IRWIN P. BRADLE & CO.,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

ALICE WILDE.

CHAPTER I. THE CABIN HOME.

"THAT ar' log bobs 'round like the old sea-sarpint," muttered Ben Perkins to himself, leaning forward with his pole-hook and trying to fish it, without getting himself too deep in the water. "Blast the thing! I can't tackle it no how;" and he waded in deeper, climbed on to a floating log, and endeavored again to catch the one which so provokingly evaded him.

Ben was a "hand" employed in David Wilde's saw-mill, a few rods further up the creek; a young fellow not without claims to admiration as a fine specimen of his kind and calling. His old felt-hat shadowed hair as black as an Indian's, and made the swarthy hue of his face still darker; his cheeks and lips were red, and his eyes blacker than his hair. The striped wammus bound at the waist by a leather belt, and the linen trowsers rolled up to the knees, were picturesque in their way and no unbecoming the lithe, powerful figure.

Ben had bobbed for saw-logs a great many times in his life and was a person too quick and dextrous to meet with frequent accidents; but upon this day, whether the sudden sight of a tiny skiff turning the bend of the river just below and heading up the creek threw him off his guard, or what it was, certain it is that, stretching forward after that treacherous log, he lost his balance and fell into the water. He did not care for the ducking, but he cared for the eyes which saw him receive it; his ears tingled and his cheeks burned as he heard the silvery laugh which greeted his misfortune. Climbing up on to a log again, he stood dripping like a merman and blushing like a peony, as the occupant of the boat rowed nearer.

"Keep out the way them logs, Miss Alice, or ye'll get npsot!" he cried, glad of an excuse for attracting attention from his own mishap.

"I can take care of myself, thank you," was the gay answer. "Do you see father's boat coming, anywhere in sight, Ben? He was to be home this afternoon; and I took a fancy to go down and meet him."

"I don't see nuthin' of it. That war a mighty big raft he took down to Center City; the biggest raft that ever floated on that river, I reckon. He mought not be home for two or three days yet, Miss Alice. Gorry! but won't he hev a heap of money when he sells that ar' raft!"

"And he'll be sure to bring me something pretty—*he* always does."

"He knows what's what," responded Ben, stealing a sidelong, admiring glance at the sweet young face in the skiff.

If a compliment was intended, it was not understood by the hearer.

"Yes, father always knows *just* what suits me best. Dear father! I hope he *will* come home to-night. I've been out picking blackberries for supper—just look at my hands," and she held up two pretty, dimpled hands, as if to show how charming they were, instead of to betray the purple-tipped fingers.

But Alice Wilde did not know they were pretty, in sober truth, for she had never been praised, flattered, nor placed in a situation where she could institute comparisons.

"Well, Ben, good-by. I shall float down the river a few miles, and if I don't see him, I can row back alone."

"You're mighty pert with the oars, for a gal. I never see'd no woman 't could row a boat like you, Miss Alice."

"Thank you," she said, with a bright smile, as she turned her little birchen skiff about and struck out into the river again.

Ben watched that graceful form until it was out of sight, heaving a sigh as he turned again to his work, which told how absorbed he had been.

Drifting down the river, under the shadow of precipitous bluffs, while the sunshine flecked with gold the rolling prairie-land upon the opposite side, the young girl sung wild negro melodies which she had learned of the two old colored people who formed her father's retinue of house-servants. Rich and clear, her voice floated through those beautiful solitudes, heard only by the envious birds in the trees which overtopped the bluffs.

Presently she had listeners, of whom she was unaware. An abrupt bend in the river hid from her the little boat with its single sail, fluttering like a butterfly against the current. It held two persons—David Wilde, the owner and captain of the raft of which Ben had spoken, a rough, striking-looking man of middle age, attired in a pink calico shirt and brown linen jacket and trowsers, who sat at the tiller smoking his pipe; and a young man of four and twenty, extremely good-looking and fashionably dressed.

"What's that?" exclaimed the latter, as the sweet voice thrilled over the water.

"That's herself, sure," replied the raftsman, listening; "she's comin' to meet me, I reckon. It's just like her."

"And who's 'herself'?" queried the other, laughing.

"My cub, sir. Won't yer take yer flute out of yer pocket and give her a tune, before she sees us? It'll set her to wonderin' what 'n earth it is."

The young man put the pieces of his flute together, and joined in the strain, rising loud and exultant upon the breeze; the

voiced ceased; he stopped playing; the voice began, and again he accompanied it; it sung more exuberantly than ever, and the flute blent in with it accordantly.

It was not until they were nearly upon her fairy bark that they came in sight of the singer, her bright hair flying, her cheeks redder than roses with the double exercise of rowing and singing. Philip Moore thought he had never beheld so lovely an apparition.

"Oh, father, I'm so glad you're home again. Did you hear the beautiful echo?" she asked, her eyes all aglow with surprise and pleasure. "I never heard any thing like it before. It must be the rocks."

"Twan't the rocks—'twas this here gentleman," said David Wilde, smiling. "Mr. Moore, this is my daughter Alice."

Unknown to himself, his tone and look were full of pride as he presented her to his companion, who never paid a more sincere tribute of admiration to any woman, however accomplished, than he did to the artless child who returned his deep bow with so divine a blush.

"I thought I'd come to meet you, and run a race home with you," she said to her father, with a fond look.

"That's just like my little cub—allers on hand. Wal, go ahead! the breeze is fair, and I guess we'll beat ye. Hope ye'll make good time, fur I'm beginning to get growly in the region of the stomach."

"Pallas expects you," returned Alice, laughing.

"If your skiff were large enough for two, I'd take those oars off your hands," said the young gentleman.

"Nobody ever touches this but myself;" and away sped the fairy affair with its mistress, darting ahead like an arrow, but presently dropping behind as they tacked, and then shooting past them again, the young girl stealing shy glances, as she passed, at the stranger who was watching her with mingled curiosity and admiration. So sweetly bashful, yet so arch and piquant—so rustic, yet so naturally graceful—so young, he could not tell whether she esteemed herself a child or a woman—certainly she was very different from the dozen of tow-headed children he had taken it for granted must run wild about the "cabin" to which he was now about to make a visit.

"How many children have you, Mr. Wilde?"

"She's all. That's my mill you see just up the mouth of the creek thar. We're nigh on to my cabin now; when we've rounded that p'int we shall heave in sight. Seems to me I smell supper. A cold snack is very good for a day or two, but give me suthin' of Pallas' getting up after it. Thar's the cabin!"

Philip had been following with his eyes the pretty sailor, who had already moored her craft to the foot of a huge elm, overhanging the gravelly shore from a sloping bank above, and now stood in the shadow of the tree awaiting them.

If it had not been for the blue smoke curling up in thin wreaths from a stick chimney which rose up in the rear, he would hardly have discovered the dwelling at first sight--a little one-story log-house, so completely covered with clambering vines that it looked like a green mound. Tartarian honeysuckles waved at the very summit of the chimney, and wild roses curtained every window.

Taking upon herself the part of hostess, Alice led the way to the house. Philip was again agreeably surprised as he entered it. He had read of squatter life, and considered himself "posted" as to what to expect--corn-bread and bacon, an absence of forks and table-cloths, musketoes, the river for a wash-basin, sand for soap, the sun for a towel, and the privilege of sharing the common bed. But upon entering the cabin, he found himself in a large room, with two smaller apartments partitioned from the side; the cooking to be done in a shanty in the rear. The table was set in the center of the room, with a neat cloth, and a great glass plate, heaped with blackberries, stood upon it, and was surrounded by a wreath of wild-flowers woven by the same dimpled hands which had managed the oars so deftly.

"Clar to gracious, masser, you took us unbeknown."

The new speaker was an old negro woman, portly and beaming, who appeared at the back door, crowned with a yellow turban, and bearing in her left hand that scepter of her realm, the rolling-pin.

"But not unprepared, hey, Pallas?"

"Wal, I dunno, masser. I didn't spec' the pickaninny 'ud eat more'n *one* roas' chicken. But thar's two in de oven; for, to tell de trute, masser, I had a sense dat you war a-comin'; and I know'd if you wasn't, me and my ole man wouldn't be afraid of two fowls."

"But I've brought home company, Pallas."

"Hey you now, masser? I'se mighty glad to hear it. I'd as soon wait on masser's frien's as to sing de Land of Canaan. Yer welcome," she added, dropping a courtesy to the guest with as much importance as if she were mistress of the house--as, in fact, she had been, in most matters, for many long years. He made her a deep and gracious bow, accompanied by a smile which took her old heart by storm.

Retreating to the kitchen outside, where Saturn, her husband, had been pressed into service, and sat with an apron over his knees paring potatoes, buoyed up by the promise of roast chicken from his wife, she told him, as she rolled and cut out her biscuits:

"The finest gentleum she had sot eyes on sence she left ole Virginny. His smile was enough to melt buttah--jas' de smile what a sweet-mannered young gentleum ought to have. She was mighty glad," she added, in a mysterious whisper, "dat *she* pickaninny was no older."

"Wha' for?" queried Saturn, pausing, with a potato on the end of his knife, and a look of hopeless darkness on his face, barring the expanding whites of his eyes.

"You nebbah could see tru a grin'stone till I'd made a hole in it for yer. It's a wonder I tuk up wid such an ole fool as you is, Saturn. If yer eyes were wurf half as much as dem pertaters' eyes, yer could see for yerself. Hasn't masser swore ag'in dem city gentleum?"

"He swore—dat's so."

"And he never would forgive one as would come and steal away his precious child—nebbah!" continued Pallas, lifting her rolling-pin threateningly at the bare thought. "If he war rich as gold, and lubbed her to destruction, 'twouldn't make a speck o' difference. He's jealous of the very ground she walks on; and he hates dem smoof-spoken city folks."

"Do you suspec' lie'sa kidnapper—dat ar' vis'ter?" asked Saturn, his eyes growing still bigger, and looking toward the door as if he thought of the possibility of the handsome young stranger carrying *him* off.

"You is born a fool, and you can't help it. Put 'em 'taters in de pot, and mind yer own bisness. I want some more wood for dis fish—immejetly!"

When Pallas said "immejetly!" with that majestic air, there was nothing left for her worser half save to obey, and he retreated to the wood-pile with alacrity. On going out he run against Ben Perkins, who had been standing by the open door, unperceived, for the last five minutes.

"Why, Ben, dat you?" asked Pallas, good-naturedly, not dreaming that he had overheard her confidential conversation.

"Yes; I came up to the house to see if Captain Wilde had any orders for the mill to-night. I see him when he passed the creek. Who's with him, Pallas?"

The old colored woman gave a sudden sharp glance at the youth's troubled face.

"It's a frien' for all I know. What bisness is it of yours to be askin'?"

"I s'pose I bain't no business. Do you think it's likely it's anybody as expects to marry Miss Alice?" His voice trembled.

"Marry Miss Alice! What a simpl'un you is, Ben. Wha's that pickaninny but a chile yet, I'se like to know? a little chit as don't know nothin' 'bout marryin' nobody. 'Sides that, long as her fadder libs, she'll never marry, not if it war a king. He'd be mad as fury ef any one was to dar' to speak of such a thi'g. Humf! my pickaninny, indeed!" with an air of scorn and indignation deeply felt by the youth, whose face was flushing beneath the implied rebuke. "Ef you'll stop a few minutes, I'll give yer some of dese soda biscuits," she said, after a brief silence, secretly pitying a trouble at which she had shrewdly guessed, though she resented the audacity of the hope from which it

sprung. "Dat ar' man-cook what gets up the vittles for the mill-hands can't make sech biscuits as mine. Stop now, and hab some, won't yer?"

"Thank ye, Pallas, I ain't hungry," was the melancholy reply—melancholy when proceeding from a hearty, hardworking young man, who *ought* to have been hungry at that hour of the day. He turned away, and without even going to the cabin-door to inquire of Mr. Wilde as he had proposed, struck into the pine-woods back of the garden-patch.

CHAPTER II.

PALLAS AND SATURN.

SUPPER was over, and David Wilde was cutt'ng with his jack-knife the strings of several packages which had accompanied him on his trip back from Center City, where he had disposed of his raft. His guest sat upon a wooden settle, as much interested as the others in the proceedings, though his eyes were fixed mostly upon the happy girl, who, with all of her sex's love of finery, was upon her knees on the floor, assisting, with smiling eyes and eager fingers, at the pleasant task of bringing forth the contents of these packages. A dark-blue dress of the finest merino, a rich shawl, and some pretty laces for collars and ruffles rewarded her search. There was another package which was all her own, with which she was equally delighted; it was made up of a dozen of books, whose titles she eagerly read before she continued her explorations.

"Here's a dress Mr. Moore picked out for you," said the raftsmen, maliciously, unfolding a gorgeous red and yellow calico.

"But I hadn't seen you, you know," returned Philip, coloring.

At this moment Pallas, who had an eye upon the bundles, came in on a pretense of clearing off the table.

"Come and look at my beautiful presents, Pallas," cried his young mistress.

"You've got little les'n an angel fer a fadder, my dear chile," ejaculated that personage, catching sight of the calico from the corner of her eye while admiring the merino.

Alice looked up into the rough, sunburnt face of her father with a smile; the idea of his being an angel was not so ludicrous to her as it was to their guest.

"Here's somethin' to help you along with yer sewing," continued David, taking a little box containing a gold thimble from his jacket-pocket. "See if it fits," and he placed it on the little fair hand.

"It sets to your finger like a cup to an acorn," exclaimed

Pallas. "Thar's none like masser to tell pete's ly what a person is a-wishin' fer," an' I again her covert glance sought the calico.

"Sartainly, old girl; no doubt," chuckled the raffsman. "If that is the case, jist take them handkerchiefs and that dress-pattern and give 'em to Saturn. You can keep the vest and the tobacco' and the boots yerself, and especially the trowsers—you've allers worn 'em!"

"Laws, masser, ef I *haven't*, things would a gone to rack and ruin long ago. Dat nigger of mine no use, but to sleep hisself to a fit. He's a great cross to me, Saturn is," and with a profusion of smiles and thanks she carried off her booty to the kitchen, graciously dispensing his share to her "ole man," and concluding to be unusually affable.

"Ef we only had a camp-meetin' to go to now," she said, spreading out the new jacket and trowsers beside the calico. "It's four year, come nex' monf, sence we went to dat meetin' down de river. I declar' it's jes' like de heathen fer decent called persons not to have any place to holler Glory, and show der new clo'es.

"I'd like to go to meetin' will dese boots," remarked her spouse, looking down at the immense pair into which he had squeezed his feet.

"Ef you did, all I can say is, dar' would be no room for anybody else, dar'," returned Pallas, giving way, by mere force of habit, to her custom of snubbing her companion.

"Wha' fer?" inquired Saturn.

"No matter, ef yer don't know. My! my!"—hopelessly—"what a fool you is!"

"Dat's so, wif!" was the humble reply, "But," picking up courage at the sight of his new rig, "mebbe when I get my new jacket on, I'll know more."

"Y—, I better put it on quick, den, an' I neff'er take it off."

When the dishes were washed, Pallas took the calico in her lap and sat down.

"I've a sense," she said, in a low voice, "dat things is goin' to happen."

"Wha' fer?"

"I haven't had such a sense for years," she continued, too pro-
pensive to let him have a moment's reprieve. "And when I've
a sense, it always comes to suthin'—it never fails. I haven't had
such a sense since my dad. 'Pears to me dat young gen-
tlemen's just as like dat as finally. An' it's de same name—carus
isn't it?"

"I do, m'ch. I do, an' at random, lost in the study of his feet; "dem boots is beauties."

"I do, m'ch. I do, an' I thought him here fer. He's all is been
to be. He tell me 'twash a pardner in de steam saw-mill dat
takes his lumber off his han's; a young storekeeper in Center
City now, though he use to be a lawyer in New York—bress

It! It's a long time since I set eyes on dat city now. Our fus' masser, Mortimer Moore, usin to invite no shopkeepers to his house. My! my! but he was a mighty proud man, and dat's what made all de trouble. Dem was grand times, wid all de serbents and de silber—never thought I could come to dis—but I promised missus, when she died, I'd stan' by her chile, and I shall stand by her, long as der's any bref left in dis ole body—bless her! She's growing up jes' as han'some as ever her mififer was, and she's got her ways; and as for manners—hi! hi! I's might larf at the idea of ole Pallas learnin' manners to her missus, but dat, ain't nobody knows better how table ought to be set and sarbed, and things to be done, than my dear chile now, dis minit. Ef masser *will* keep her, like de children of Israel, forty years in de wilderness, she shall be a lady for all dat, bress her, and a Christian lady, too! She knows all de best part of de psalms by heart, now; and she can sing hymns likea cherubim. Sometimes I mos' think she's got one of dem golden harps in her hand. If dat ole fool ain't asleep. Saturn!" kicking his shins, "wake up yer, and go to bed—immejetly!"

Saturn had a discouraging time getting his new boots off in the sleepy state which had come upon him; but this being at last accomplished, and he safely lodged in bed, which took up the greater portion of Pallas' settin'-room," off her kitchen, she stole out to the corner of the house to "spy out the land," in Bible language, which, to her, sheltered the deed from opprobrium. Pallas was no mischief-making listener; she considered herself entitled to know all that transpired in the family, whose secrets she kept, and whose welfare she had in her heart.

"My! my! they make a pretty pictur' sittin' dar' in de light ob de moon," she thought, peeping at the group, now gathered outside of the door, enjoying the glory of a most brilliant August moon. The young stranger was telling some story of foreign adventure, his fine face and animated gestures showing well in the pure light, while the old rascismen smoked his pipe to keep away the musketoes, as he said—though they were not particularly troublesome in that neighbourhood—and Alice sat on the step at his feet, her arms folded over his knee, her eager, glib face lifted to the story-teller.

"He sartainly belongs to *our* family of Moores, ef he ain't no dearer than a forty-second cousin," whispered Pallas to herself. "Masser don't know 'em, root and branch, as well as I do, else he'd see it right away. How that pickaninny is a-watchin' of him talk! Laws! nobody knows what they're doin' in dis yere worl', or we'd all act different."

As she stood there, taking observations, she thought she saw a person in the shade of the great elm on the bank; and not being afraid of any thing but "ghosts" and "spirts," she went back to the kitchen for a bucket, as an excuse for going down to the river and finding out who it was.

"Ef it's that yer young Perkins, won' I let him know what a fool he's making of himself—he, indeed!—Gerry! I'll give a scolding 'at'll last him his lifetime!" But she had no opportunity of venting her indignation, as the form, whosoever it was, slipped down the bank, and ran away along the wet sand, taking shelter behind a ledge of rock, before she could recognize it.

"My! my! dis ole bucket full of siber," she ejaculated, as she lifted it out of the river, glittering in the moonlight. "Dis vere ribber looks laddy as de stream of life dat's flowin' round de streets ob Paradise, to night;" and the good old creature stood watching the barnished ripples. The rush of waters and the murmur of the pine forest were sweet even to her ears.

"It's a bad night for young folks to be sittin' out-o-doors," she reflected, shaking her yellow turban suggestively, as she looked at the two by the cabin-door.

But let us go back a little way with our story.

CHAPTER III.

REJECTED ADDRESSES.

Through the spacious lengths of a suite of richly-furnished rooms, a woman was wandering, with that air of nervous restlessness which betokens a mind ill at ease. The light stealing in & out through the curtains, fell upon many pictures and objects of taste and art, and all that lavish richness of plenishing to which wealthy Gothamites are prone—but upon nothing so beautiful as the mistress of them all, who now moved from place to place, lifting a costly toy here, pausing before a picture there, but really interested in neither.

"Virginia!"

Her cousin Philip had come in through the library so silently that she was unaware of his presence until he spoke, although I was waiting for him which made her so uneasy.

"Well, Philip?"

She had started when he spoke her name, but recovered her haughty self-possession immediately.

"Sit down, please, on this sofa. I can not talk to you when you are standing. You look too cool and too imperious. I have come to-day for your answer, Virginia."

They sat upon the sofa together, he turning so as to read her face, which was bent down as she played with the diamond ring upon her finger. She looked cool and quiet enough to dampen the ardor of her lover; but he was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he could not and would not understand it.

"Speak, Virginia! I can not bear this suspense."

Still she hesitated; she liked him too well to take any pleasure in giving him pain, frivolous coquette though she was.

"I have questioned my heart closely, Philip, as you bade me," she began after a few moments, "and I have satisfied myself that I can never be happy as the wife of a poor man."

"Then you do not love me! Love does not put itself in the scales and demand to be balanced with gold."

"But gold is very necessary to its welfare and long life. No, Philip, I do not know that I love you—perhaps I do not, since I am not willing to make this sacrifice. I certainly think better of you than of any other living man, except my father; I would rather marry you than any other man, if you had the wealth necessary to support me in the station for which only I am fitted. A young man, with nothing to rely upon but the profession of the law, in a great city like this, must expect to wait some time before he can pour many honors and much wealth into the lap of the woman he loves."

"You are sarcastic, Virginia."

"No, only practical. My father is not so rich as in days gone by. His fortune has dwindled until it is barely sufficient to keep up the house in the old style. If I would still preserve the family pride, still rule queen of the circle I have brought around me, I must marry rich."

"And for this you must resign a love like mine?"

"It is my nature, Philip—born in me, cherished in me. My father, I know, would not listen to the match, as highly as he esteems you. I had a sister—a woman when I was a child—you remember her, do you not? She married against his will—married poor, and tried this 'love in a cottage' sentiment. He never forgave her, and she never prospered; she is dead, poor thing, and I do not care to emulate her."

"Humph! I am to understand that your father then rears his children as slaves, to be sold to the highest bidder—that you hold yourself ready for the market?"

"Don't provoke me, Philip." The black eyes were fixed upon him haughtily.

"Forgive me, Virginia. I am half mad just now, you know. You can not say that you have not encouraged me."

"Perhaps I have—shown you the affection of a cousin. I have felt as if you were one of the family. I might even have felt a still closer interest, had I allowed myself. But I am—what you never will be—prudent. I may yet see some one whom I can really respect and love, who has also the fortune you lack; if not, I shall accept some one for my's sake, and let the love go! Don't look so scornful, Phil. I have beauty, fashion, pride of place, family, every thing but the means wherewith to set these off magnificently; and this has made me ambitious. Dear Philip, much as I like you, I could never be contented to await your slow promotion."

"Prudence is very commendable, Virginia. Its maxims fall with double force from lips as beautiful as yours. I will try to learn it. I, a man, upon whom such cold duties are supposed most naturally to devolve, will be taught by you, a soft, tender woman, who looks as if made for the better purpose of loving and teaching love. Farewell! When you see me again, perhaps I shall rival you in prudence."

"You are not going away, cousin Philip?" He was already crossing the room into the hall, as she followed him and caught his hand.

"Oh, yes, I am. Since only rich men can possess the happiness such gentle creatures have it in their power to bestow, I must make haste after wealth," and he looked down bitterly at the proud girl over whose face was coming a faint expression of remorse and relenting.

"Shall I not hear from you?" she asked, quite humbly.

"No; not until I am in a fair way to achieve that which will recommend me to your *disinterested affection*."

He withdrew his hand from her clasp, and went out with a quick, resounding step, which told of the firmness of his resolution. The girl who had rejected him sunk down in the nearest seat. She had never seen him look more—as a woman is proud to have a man look—handsome, self-reliant, determined, than in the hour of his disappointment. Two or three tears trickled through her jeweled fingers; she shook them off impatiently.

"He's a man who would never have shamed my choice," she whispered. "But I have decided for the best. I know my own disposition; I should fit at the chains which limited my power. And I am used to every indulgence. I am selfish. Poor Phil! if somebody would present you with a check for half a million, I'd marry you to-morrow."

In the mean time Philip Moore, all the dregs stirred up from the bottom of the fountain in his usually transparent soul, hurried to the office which he had just set up in Wall street. There, to fit in answer to the wish which had been aroused, he found a letter from a friend who had emigrated westward three years previously, forsaking the law for speculations in pine land, and lumber, merchandise, etc. He was doing well, was getting rich in seven days strides, had married a pretty western girl, was happy—had gone to horse-keeping, wanted a partner in business to well—had no business—recommended Philip to accept the offer—A few thousand dollars would be all the capital required.

Philip had seven thousand dollars in stocks; he sold out, shook off the dust from his feet as he left the great metropolis, and delivered his friend's letter in person in less than a fortnight.

Virginia Moore missed the convenient escort, the constant attentions, and the profound worship of her high-hearted cousin; but a richSpaniard, ugly and old, was come into the market,

and she was among the bidders. Let us leave Virginia Moore, and return to that western wilderness, where a certain little girl looks lovelier, in her blue gingham dress and wild-flower wreath, than the other in all the family diamonds.

CHAPTER IV

BEN PERKINS.

THE day after her father's return, Alice Wilde sat down to try her new thimble in running up the skirt of her merino dress. The frock which she wore, and all the others, probably, were fashioned in the style of twenty years ago—short under the arms; a belt at the waist; low in the neck; full, puffed, short sleeves; narrow skirt, and no crinoline. Her prettish hair, when it was not allowed to fall in a golden torrent around her neck, was looped up in the quaint style which marked the fashion of her dress. She looked like the portrait, come to life, of some republican belle and beauty of long ago. Quite unconscious that this ancient style had been superseded by the balloons of to-day, she measured off the three short breadths which, when hemmed, would leave her pretty ankles exposed, even as they now, with the slippers feet, peeped from her scanty gingham.

If Philip Moore had understood the mantuamaker's art, and had possessed "patterns" of the latest mode, he would not have instructed his hostess in any changes, she looked so picturesque and quaint as she was. But he did not let her sew very steadily that day. He wanted to explore the surroundings of the cabin, and she was his ready, intelligent guide.

They went back into the forest, through which thundered, ever and anon, the crash of a falling tree; for many men were busy cutting timber for another raft, on which, at its completion, Philip was to return to Center City. His business would not have detained him more than three or four days, but he was in no haste; he wanted to hunt and fish a little, and he liked the novelty of the idea of floating down the river on a raft of logs in company with a score of rough fellows. Although David Wilde sawed up some of his timber himself, his old-fashioned mill was not equal to the supply, and he sent the surplus down to the team saw-mills, one of which was owned by Philip and his partner.

It called forth all his assability to conquer the shyness of his pretty guide, who at last dared to look full into his face with those brilliant blue eyes, and to tell him where the brook made the sweetest music, where the fawns came oftenest to drink, where the violets lingered the latest, and where there was a grape-vine swing.

Both of them looked very happy when they came in, just in time to meet Mr. Wilde at the supper-table, who had been at the mill all day. He did not seem in such good spirits. Some new thought troubled him. His keen, gray eyes scanned the countenance of his child, as if searching for something hitherto undiscovered; and then turned suspiciously to the stranger, to mark if he, too, held the same truth. For the first time it occurred to him, that his "cub," his pet, was no longer a little girl—that he might have done something fatally foolish in bringing that fine city aristocrat to his cabin. Had he not always hated and despised these dandified caricatures of men?—despised their vanity, falsehood, and affectation?—hated their vices, their kid-gloves, their perfumed handkerchiefs, and their fashionable nonsense? Yet, pleased ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~one~~ of them, and on a mere matter of business, he had, with ~~at~~ the wisdom of a fool, much less of a father, brought one of that very class to his house. How angry he was with himself his compressed lip alone revealed, as he sharply eyed his guest. Yet the laws of hospitality were too sacred with him to allow of his showing any rudeness to his guest, as a means of getting rid of him.

Unconscious of the bitter jealousy in her father's heart, Alice was as gay as a humming-bird. She had never been happier. We are formed for society; children are charmed with children, and youth delights in youth. Alice had been ignorant of this sweet want, until she learned it now, by having it gratified. For, although she had passed pleasant words with such young men as chanced to be employed by her father, they had never seemed to her like companions, and she naturally adopted the reserve which her father also used with them. His cabin was his castle. No one came there familiarly, except upon invitation. The "hands" were all fed and lodged in his house by themselves, near the mill. The gloom of the host gradually affected the vivacity of the others; and the whole household retired early to rest.

The next day Philip set off to the mill with Mr. Wilde, carrying on his shoulders the excellent rifle of the latter, as he proposed, after business was over, to make a search for deer, now nearly driven away from that locality by the sound of the ax in those solitudes once so deep and silent.

"Tell Aunt Pallas I bring her a haunch of venison for supper," he said gayly to the young girl, touching his straw hat with a grace that quite confused her.

She looked after them wistfully as they went away. She felt lonely; her sewing fatigued her; the sun was too hot to go out on the water; she didn't know what to do. Even her new book failed to once to keep her interested many hours. When Paul looked for her to help pick over berries to dry, she was not to be found. She had sought that delightful refuge of early youth—the garret; which in this instance was but a lost over-

the main story, reached by a ladder, and seldom resorted to by any one, except when the raftsmen stored away a bear-skin, a winter's store of nuts, or something of the kind. To-day Alice felt powerfully attracted toward a certain trunk which had stood in that garret ever since she could remember. It was always locked; she had never seen it open; and did not know its contents. Now, for a wonder, the key was in the lock; she never thought of there being any thing wrong in the act, as she had never heard the trunk mentioned, and had never been forbidden access to it, and lifting the lid, she sat down beside it and began an examination of its mysteries. Lifting up a napkin spread over the top, she was met by a lovely face, looking up at her from the ivory upon which it was so exquisitely painted. The breath died upon her lips.

"It must be my mother's; how very beautiful she was—my mother!"

Hot tears rushed up into her eyes at this life-like vision of a being she did not remember, of whom old Pallas often spoke, but whom her father seldom mentioned—never, save in the most intimate moments of their association. She was sorry she had opened the trunk, realizing at once that if her father had desired her to know of the miniature he would have shown it to her years ago; she had a glimpse of a white silk dress, some yellow lace, a pair of white silk slippers, and long, white kid gloves, but she would not gratify the intense curiosity and interest which she felt. She remembered hearing her father do call from the garret late in the preceding night; and she guessed now the purpose of his visit.

An impulse was given to her thoughts which drove away her restless mood; she retreated from the loft, and set very quickly to work helping Pallas with the blackberries. She was sitting in the kitchen-door, an apron on, and a large bowl in her lap, when Philip Moore came through the pines, dragging after him a young deer which he had slain. Pallas was on a bench outside the shanty, and it was at her feet the hunter laid his trophy.

"Bress you, masser Moore, I'se mighty glad you went a-huntin'—Miss Alice she laughed and say de ce I needn't be afraid of you, 'cause you was a city gentleman, but I tol' her she didn't know nuffin' about it. I was afcared you'd get tired of whitefish and salmon, and bacon and towls—dis you's a jes' decent I want."

"Well, Aunt Pallas, I shall claim one of your best pies as my reward," said the amiable lumber, laughing. "But Alice here mustn't think I do one can do any thing right except loggers and lumbermen."

"Oh, I don't!" exclaimed she, blushing. "I think you do every thing beautifully, Mr. Moore, that you've been up to do, you know—but shooting deer—they don't do that in cities, do they?"

"Not exactly in cities; but there are wild woods near enough New York yet for young men to have a chance at gaining that accomplishment. I suppose you woul ln't trust me to take you out sailing, to-morrow, would you?"

"If she woul l, yer a b'r-l-dn't do it, for I want the boat myself. Captain Wille's goin' to send me down to the p'nt with it."

Mr. Moore looked up in surprise at the speaker, who had just come up from the river, and whose looks and tones were still ruder than his words.

"Hi, Ben! yer as early as a b'ar," spoke up Pallas; "yer haven't a grain of perliteness in yer body," she added, in a lower tone.

"I leaves perliteness to them as is wimmen enough to want it," answered Ben, throwing back a glance of defiance and contempt at the innocent stranger, as he stepped into the shanty. "I want them new saws as came home with the capt'n."

"There's somebody that looks upon me in the same light you do," laughed Philip, when the youth had secured the saws and departed.

"Oh, Mr. Moore, you don't know how I look upon you!" she exclaimed, earnestly; neither did he, any more than he knew how the fate of that black-eyed, heavy-browed mill-hand was to be mixed and mingled with his own.

He admired Alice Wille as he would have done any other pretty and singular young creature; but he never thought of loving her; she was a child in his eyes, ignorant and uneducated in many things, though always graceful and refined; a child, who would be out of place in any other sphere except that peculiar one in which she now moved. He did not guess that in her eyes he was a hero, almost supernatural, faultless, glorious—such as an imaginative girl who had seen nothing of the world, but who had read many poems and much fiction, would naturally create out of the first material thrown in her way.

Not all through that happy fortnight of his visit he talked with her freely, answering her eager questions about the world from which she was so sheltered, roamed the woods with her, and the river, played his flute, sang favorite love-songs, and all without reflecting upon the deathless impression he was making. Keen eyes were upon him, and saw nothing to justify easier; he woul l have laughed at the idea of that little girl's falling in love with him, if he had thought of it at all; but he did not think of it; sometimes he talked with her, as if they were both children; and sometimes he kindly took upon himself the part of a teacher in matters about which she had an interest. He was touched by her beauty and innocence; and was extremely guarded in her presence not to let a hint of evil be breathed upon that young soul—her father, Pallas, all who approached her, seemed naturally to pay her parity the same deference.

The raft for which Philip was waiting was now in readiness, and was to commence its drifting journey upon the next day. Alice had fled into the pine-woods, after dinner, to anticipate, with dread, her coming loneliness; for her father was also to accompany it, and would be absent nearly three weeks. Her footsteps wandered to a favorite spot, where the grape-vine swing had held her in its arms, many and many a frolic hour. She sat down in it, swinging herself slowly to and fro. Presently a footfall startled her from her abstraction, and, looking up, she saw Ben Perkins coming along the path with a cage in his hand, of home manufacture, containing a gorgeous forest-bird which he had captured.

"I reckon I needn't go no further, Miss Alice," he said; "I war a bringin' this bird to see if you'd be so agreeable as to take it. I cotched it, yesterday in the wood."

"Oh, Ben, how pretty it is!" she cried, quickly brushing away her tears, that he might not guess what she had been crying about.

"It sings like any thing. It's a powerful fine singer, Miss Alice—I thought mebbe 't would be some comfort to ye, seein' yer about to lose that flute that's been turnin' yer head so."

"What do you mean?—you speak so roughly, Ben."

"I know I ain't particularly smooth-spoken; but I mean what I say, which is more'n some folks do. Some folks thinks it good sport to be tellin' you fine fibs, I've no doubt."

"Why do you wish to speak ill of those of whom you have no reason to, Ben? It isn't generous."

"But I *have* reason—On, Alice, you don't know how much!" He set the bird cage down, and came closer to her. "I've got suthin' to say that I can't keep back no longer. Won't you set down 'side of me on this log?"

"I'd rather stand, Ben," she said, drawing back as he was about to take her hand.

The quivering smile upon his lip when he asked the question changed to a look which half frightened her, at her gesture of refusal.

"You didn't object to settin' by that town chap; you sat here on this very log with him, for I seen you. Cuss him, and his fine clothes, I say?"

"I can not listen to you, Ben, if you use such language; I don't know what's the matter with you to day," and I say turned to go home.

"I'll tell you what's the matter, Alice Wilde," and he caught her hand almost fiercely. "I can't keep still any longer and I see that feller hangin' 'round. I didn't mean to speak this long-time yet, but that stranger's driven me crazy. Do you s'pose I kin keep quiet and see him smirking and bowin' and blowin' on that blasted flute, around you; and you lookin' at him as if yer couldn't take yer eyes off? Do you s'pose I kin keep quiet and

see him making a simpleton of the prettiest girl that ever grow'd? You needn't wince—it's true; jist as soon as he'd got away from here he'd forget all about you, or only think of you to laugh at you Hoosier ways with some proud lady as fine as himself."

"Oh, I am afraid it's too true!" burst forth Alice, involuntarily.

"Yer may bet yer life on that, Alice Wilde! Or, at the best, he'd take yer away from yer own old father as loves the ground you tread, and try and make a lady of you, and never let you speak to your own flesh and blood ag'in. While I—I wouldn't do nuthin' but what yer father wanted; I'd settle down side of him, work for him, see to things, and take the care off his mind when he got old. Yer father hates them proud peacocks, Alice—he *hates* 'em, and so do I! I know he'd rather have me. Say yes, do now, that's a good girl."

"I don't understand you, Ben," said Alice, coldly, trying to pass, for she was troubled and wanted to get away.

"I'll tell you then," he said. "I want you to marry me, Alice. I've been thinking about it these two years—night and day, night and day."

"Why, Ben," cried the startled child, "I never thought of it—never! and I can not now. Father will be very angry with you. Let go of my hand; I want to go home."

"You ain't a little girl any longer, Alice Wilde, and I guess yer father'll find it out. He may be mad for a spell; but he'll get over it; and when he comes to think of the chances of his dyin' and leavin' yer alone, he'll give his consent. Come, Alice, say yes, do, now."

The intense eagerness of his manner made her tremble, from sympathy, but she looked into his blazing eyes firmly, as she replied, "Never! so long as I live, never! And you must not speak of it again, unless you want to be discharged from—"

"Don't you threaten me, Miss Alice. I ain't the stuff to be threatened. If I'd had said what I've said this day, three weeks ago, you wouldn't have been so mighty cool. Not that I think I'm good enough for ye—there ain't the man livin' that's that; but I am as good as some as thinks themselves better—and I won't be bluffed off by any broadcloth coat. I've loved you ever since you were a little girl, and fell in the mill-pond once, and I fished ye out. I've loved ye more years than he's seen ye weeks, and I won't be bluffed off. Jes so sure as I live, that man shall never marry you, Alice Wilde."

"He never thought of it; and it hurts me, Ben, to have you speak of it. Let me go now, this instant."

She pulled her hand out of his, and hurried away, forgetful of the bird he had given her.

Love, rage, and despair were in the glance he cast after her; but when, a few moments later, as he made his way back toward the mill, he passed Philip Moore, who gave him a pleasant

careless nod, ha'e—the dangerous hate of envy, jealousy, and ignorance, darkened his swarthy brow.

Poor Alice, nervous almost to sobbing, pursued her homeward way. She had never thought of marriage except as a Paradise in some far, Arcadian land of dreams which she had fancied from books and the instincts of her young heart; and now to have the idea thrust upon her by this rude, determined fellow, who doubtless considered himself her equal, shocked her as a bird is shocked and hurt by the rifle's clamor. And if this young man thought himself a fit husband for her, perhaps others thought the same—perhaps her father would wish her to accept him, some time in their far future—perhaps Philip—ah, Philip! how almost glorified he looked to her vision as at that moment he came out of the forest shadows into the path, his straw hat in his hand, and the wind tossing his brown hair.

"Here is the little humming-bird, at last! Was it kind of her to fly away by herself on this last afternoon of my stay?"

How gay his voice, how beaming his smile, while she was so sad! She felt it and grew sadder still. She tried to reply as gayly, but her lip trembled.

"What's the matter with the little Wilde-rose?" he asked, kindly looking down into the suffused eyes.

"I've been thinking how very lonely I shall be. My father is going away, too, you know, and I shall have no one but good old Pallas."

"And that handsome young man I just saw parting from you," he said, mischievously, looking to see her blush and smile.

"Oh, Mr. Moore, is it possible you think I could care for him?" she asked, with a sudden air of womanly pride which vanished in a deep blush the next instant.

"Well, I don't know; you are too good for him," he answered, frankly, as if the idea had just occurred to him.

An expression of pain swept over Alice's face.

"I know, Mr. Moore, how you must regard me; and I can not blame you for it. I know that I am ignorant—a foolish, ignorant child,—that my dress is odd, my manner awkward,—that the world, if it should see me, would laugh at me—that my mind is uneducated,—but oh, Mr. Moore, you do not know how eager I am to learn—how hard I should study! I wish my father would send me away to school."

"That would just spoil your sweet, peculiar charms, little Alice."

He smoothed her hair soothingly, as he would have done a child's; but something in her tone half put a new thought in his mind; he looked at her earnestly as she blushed beneath this first slight caress which he had ever given her. "Can it be so?" he asked himself; and in his eyes the young girl suddenly took more womanly proportions. "How very—how exquisitely beautiful she is now, with the soul glowing through her face

Shall I ever again set a woman such as this—pure as an infant, loving, devoted, unselfish, and so beautiful?" Another face, larger, clearer, with trails of perfumed black hair, rose before his mental vision, and took place beside this sweet, trouble-laden countenance. One so unmoved, so determined, even in the moment of giving bitter pain—this other so confiding, so shy, so full of every girlish beauty. Philip was touched—*want* to saying something which he might afterward regret; but he was a Moore, and he had his pride and his prejudices, stubborn as old Master Moore's, nearly. These hardened his heart against the sentiment he saw trembling through that eloquent countenance.

"You are but a little girl yet, and will have plenty of chance to grow wise," he continued, playfully. "This pretty Wilde-rose 'needs not the foreign aid of ornament.' When I come again, I hope to find her just as she is now—unless she should have become the bride of that stalwart forester."

"Then you are coming again?" she asked, ignoring the cruel kindness of the latter part of his speech, and thinking only of that dear future possibility of again seeing and hearing him, again being in his presence, no matter how indifferent he might be to her.

For Alice Wilde, adoring him as no man ever deserved to be adored, still, in her forest simplicity, called not her passion love, nor cherished it from any hope of its being reciprocated. No; she considered herself unworthy of the thought of one so much more accomplished, so much wiser than herself. Hers was

"The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow;"

and now that there was a chance in the future for her to burn her life away still more cruelly, she grew a shade happier.

"I have business with your father which will bring me here again, perhaps this fall, in October; certainly in the spring. Will I find you when I come again, Alice? You've been a wild rose, and I owe you many happy hours. I'll like to have you's the trifling return."

She looked up in his face sadly, thinking she should like to ask him to remain for her, but she dared not trust herself.

"I'll wait and select some books—such as you think I ought to have, my father will lay them for me."

"Do you love jewelry and such pretty trifles as other girls seek after?"

"I really don't know; I've no doubt I could cultivate such a taste," she replied, with some of her native archness.

"I won't try very hard—you're better without," he said, kissing a light kiss on her forehead; and the two went slowly away, walking more silently than was their wont.

Father saw them, as they came up through the garden, and gave them a scrutinizing look which did not seem to be satisfactory.

"Dat cuile's trouble's jes' begun," she murmured to herself.

"Ef dese yere ole arms could hide her away from ebery sorrow, Pallas would be happy. But dey can't. Things happen as sure as the worl'; and girls will be girls—it's in em; jes' as sartin as it's in eggs to be chickens, and acorns to be oaks. Hi! Li!"

CHAPTER V.

AN APPALLING VISITOR.

ONE bright September day, after David Wilde had been gone about a week with his raft, a wood-cutter came to the cabin with bad news. He informed Alice that the woods were on fire two or three miles back, and that the wind was driving the fire in a broad belt of a mile wide directly toward the house; that if the wind did not subside with the setting of the sun, nothing could preserve the place from destruction by the middle of the next day. Alice had been sitting at the window, thinking how delicious that soft, dry wind was; but now she prayed with all her heart that it might speedily die. It was yet many hours to sunset; and she, with Pallas, went into the forest until they could see the fire, and were in some danger from the drifting sparks. The foresters shook their heads and told her to be prepared for the worst; Pallas groaned and prayed as if she had been at a camp-meeting; but Alice, although she trembled before the mighty power of the conflagration, endeavored not to lose her presence of mind.

"I shall hope for the best," she said to the men, "but shall be prepared for the worst. Go to the mill and bring round by the river all the skiffs you can muster—there are two or three, are there not? They will be ready by evening, and if the wind does not change, or go down, by that time, we will try and save the furniture by means of the boats. Come, Pallas, let us go home and pack up the smaller things."

"Home!" The word sounded sweet when destruction hovered so near; but Alice had a brave heart; she would think of nothing now but of being equal to the emergency; her calmness had a salutary effect upon the characteristic excitability of her able attendant, who followed her back in quite a composed and serviceable mood.

Moving quietly about, putting her precious books into packages, and getting into movable shape all those little articles of household use which become so dear from association, a looker-on would hardly have guessed how anxiously the young girl waited for sunset—how earnestly she wished that her father had been at home.

"My my! dat nigger of mine is a wusser fool 'an ever," said Pallas, as she bustled about like an embodied storm; "jes' as

him, Miss Alice; he's went and put on his bes' clo'es, and dar' he stan' is, nebber doin' a single ting, but jes' holding dem new boots of his."

"What are you dressed up for, Saturn?" called Alice, laughing, in spite of her anxiety, to find that he had made provision for that which was dearest to him—his new suit would be saved if he was, and if he perished, it would share his fate.

"Oh, missis," he replied, looking foolish, "it's the easiest way to carry 'em."

"Better put your boots on, also; then you'll have your hands to work with," suggested Alice.

"Jes' so, missis; I never thought of dat;" and on went the boots, after which Saturn was ready to get as much in the way as possible.

At sunset, the boats, consisting of two little skiffs which would hold but small freightage, and one larger boat which would accommodate the heavier pieces of furniture, were moored under the stately oak tree which had so long stood sentinel over the forest home. Three or four men, among whom was Ben Perkins, held themselves in readiness to give the necessary assistance.

The sun went down in a clear sky; there were no clouds to threaten a wished-for rain; but that cold, firm wind which sometimes blows unceasingly three days at a time in the autumn months, rose higher and higher. There was no moon, and as twilight deepened into night, the thick smoke which hung about the cabin bereft the darkness intense; and occasionally when heavy volumes of smoke dropped lower toward the earth, the atmosphere was suffocating.

Pats prepared supper for all, with a strong cup of coffee to keep off drowsiness; and no one retired to bed that night. Shortly after midnight the fire traveled within sight; the roar of the conflagration swelled and deepened until it was like the dashing of a thousand seas; the hot breath of the flames aroused the wind, until it rushed in fury directly toward the cabin. Light flashes of flame would run from tree-top to tree-top, while farther back was a solid cone of fire—trunks from which all the foliage and lesser branches had fallen, stretching their glowing arms across the darkness, towering up against the starless background. Frequently these fiery columns would crumble, with crash scarcely heard through the continuous roar, sending up a fitful shower of sparks to be whirled on high by the rashing currents of air.

Fascinated by the beautiful, appalling scene, Alice sat on the bank of the river, wrapped in a shawl, from which her pale, cold fingers like a star, kindled the enthusiasm of the tale and also it her to do something in her service. As for Ben, he scarcely looked at the fire—his eyes were upon the girl.

"It's no use," he said to her, about two o'clock in the morning, "waitin' any longer. That fire will be on this very spot

by break of day. The wind's a-blown' a perfect gale. Ain't you cold, Miss Alice?"

"No, no—not at all. If you think it the only way, then let us begin. My father's desk, with his papers, stands in his bedroom. See to that first, Ben, and then the other things."

It did not take long for the active fellows engaged to clear the cabin of all its contents; every thing was put into the boats—and then, as Ben said, "it was high time to clear out."

The smoke was suffocating, and sparks and small branches of burning trees were beginning to fall around. Saturn and Pallas were safely stowed in the largest boat, while Alice paddled out into the stream in her own tiny canoe. The track of the fire was a mile in width; but the mill was not threatened by it, nor much troubled by the smoke, the wind carrying it in another direction. The house then occupied by the mill-hands must be the present shelter of the captain's family.

Down the river, in the full glare of the conflagration, floated the little convoy. The smoke was not so dense about them now; it hung high above, and rolled in dark billows far beyond. The stream was crimson with the reflection, and the faces of the party looked pallid in the lurid glare—always excepting those two sable faces, turned with awe and dread, toward that sublime picture of devastation.

Suddenly Alice, who was in advance, dropped back.

"I must return to the house," she cried, as she came alongside of the boat containing Ben and the old servants.

"No, you musn't," shouted Ben; "it's too late. It's getting mighty warm here now; and them flyin' branches 'll hit ye."

"I can't help it," replied Alice, firmly. "There's something in the garret I must have. Father would never forgive us for forgetting that trunk, Pallas."

"Law, suz! dat trunk! sure enough," groaned Pallas.

"I must get it," said the young girl.

"How can you, chile? It's locked, so yer can't get out the things, and of course you couldn't carry it down. Come back do, come back, dear chile, won't yer? What's forty trunks to yer own precious life, chile? And them sparks 'll set yer dress on fire, and the heat 'll smother yer all up."

"I've got a hatchet an' I'll break it open," shorted Alice, now fast rowing back toward the cabin.

"That girl's right down crazy," said Ben Perkins; "here, Saturn, take these oars and make 'em fly. I'm goin' after her."

He tore off his jacket and breeches, placed them into the stream, swam a score, and ran along the bank, keeping pace with the oars. Both reached the house at the same instant; they were gone perhaps three minutes, and came forth again, Ben carrying the trunk upon his shoulder. One instant they paused to look upon the wall of fire behind them; but the heat was intolerable.

"These falling bits will certainly set your clothing ablaze," said

Ben, hurrying the young girl away, who would fain have lingered yet around the home which had grown dear to her with her growth. Already the garden was withering, and the vines she had planted were drooping before their impending ruin.

"My dress is woollen," she said; "but I will go. Oh, Ben, this is terrible, is it not?"

"Yes, Miss Alice, but if ye get away safe now you may thank yer stars. I don't believe the canoe'll hold yer and the trunk both," he remarked, as he deposited his precious (to Alice, burden) in the bottom of it.

"Yes it will—but you, Ben?"

"Oh, I ain't of as much consequence as a trunk," he replied, bitterly. "Take care of yourself—don't mind me."

"I s'ain't stir from this spot until you come with me, Ben. So get into the boat, quick."

"Get in yerself, Miss Alice, and make good time. You'll be back like a brick, if yer don't get out of this soon. I'm goin' to swim alongside. What's a mile or two swimmin' down-stream?" He threw himself into the water, and struck out as he spoke.

She kept beside him, refusing to go faster than he, that she might give him aid in case he became exhausted. The river at this spot was over a mile in width, and it would have been difficult for him, tired and heated as he already was, to make the opposite shore.

As they made their way along in this manner, the wind swept the hot breath of the fire around them in suffocating waves. The cool surface of the river kept the air comparatively pure for two or three feet above it, or they would have smothered; but as it was, Alice gasped for breath convulsively at times.

"Alice! Alice! you are sufferin'—you can't stand it," cried her companion, in a voice which betrayed the agony of his soul—it thrilled through her, it was so sharp with pain.

"Don't be uneasy, Ben, we're nearly clear of the fire, now;" but, struggle as bravely as she might, she could endure the heat no longer, and she, too, leaped into the river, and sheltering herself beneath the shadow of the skiff, swam boldly on, holding a small rope in her hand, which secured it from floating off.

As soon as the advance party had got out of the smoke and heat, they awaited the return of the two, who made their appearance in an alarming condition, Alice having become exhausted in the water, and Ben having her in one arm and swimming with the other, while he towed the skiff by a rope held between his teeth.

Alice sank away when she found herself safe in Pallas' sturdy arms; and Ben might have followed her example had not one of his comrades been ready with a flask of spirits. It was thought best to administer the same restorative to the young girl, who soon revived, murmuring, "Father will be so glad the trunk is safe, Pallas."

As the morning broke, the party reached the shelter of the mill. It was two or three days before Alice was well enough to visit the ruins of her beloved home; and then she could only row along the river, and gaze upon the blackened and smoking mass, for the earth was still too hot to be ventured upon. The cabin smoldered in a heap; the top of the great elm was blackened and the foliage gone, but it had not fallen, and the grass was crisped and withered to the edge of the river.

The tears streamed down her cheeks as she gazed; but with the hopefulness of youth, she passed on, seeking a new spot to consecrate as a second home. It was vain to think of rebuilding in the same vicinity, as all its beauty was destroyed, and it would take some years for it to renew itself. She knew that her father did not wish to live too near to his mill, as he had always kept his home aloof from it; that he would be satisfied with such a spot as she liked; and she was ambitious to begin the work, for she knew the winter would be upon them before they could complete a new house, if plans were not early made. There was a lovely spot just beyond the ravages of the fire, where the river made a crescent which held in its hollow a grove of beech and elm and a sloping lawn, standing in a line of the dark pines stretching back into the interior. As her father owned the land for some distance along the shore, she was at liberty to make her choice, and she made it here.

Ben Perkins, when necessity demanded, was the carpenter of the place. He had a full set of tools, and there were others of the men capable of helping him. There was timber, plenty of it, already sawed, for the frame of the new house, and while a portion went to work upon it, boards were sawed for the siding, and shingles turned out of the shingle machine. As the "hands" said, Alice made an excellent captain.

A little sleeping apartment had been constructed off the main cabin, at the mill, and her own bed put up in it; but she did not like the publicity of the table and place, and longed for the new home to be completed.

The emotions of David Wilde were not enviable when, upon his return, he came in sight of the blackened ruins of his home. He did not so much heed the vast destruction of valuable timber, as he did the waste of that snug little vine-covered cabin, with the garden, the flowers, and the associations clustering about it. The first question he asked when he clasped his child to his heart, and found her safe, was of old Pallas: "That trunk in the garret—was it saved?"

"Pick umny seved dat ar' trunk, mister. She thought you had suthin' important in it, and she *would* go back;" at which Alice felt repaid for all the risk she had run, when she saw the look of relief upon her father's face.

Ben Perkins had planned the new house, the frame of which was ready to be raised the day after the captain's return.

Whether he had cunningly calculated that the family would some time be increased, or not, certain it is that he made liberal allowance for such a contingency. He had much natural talent as an architect, and from some printed plans which had fallen into his possession, he contrived a very pretty rustic cottage, with sharp pointed gables something in the Gothic style, and a porch in front. Alice was charmed with it.

"We'll get the house in livin' order in a month or two; but yer can't have all the fixin's over the windows and the porch before spring; I'll have to make 'em all by hand, through the winter, when thar' ain't much else a-doin'."

Ben was ambitious to conciliate Alice, and to make her feel how useful he could be to her and her father. Love prompted his head and hands to accomplish wonders. Poor Ben! Work as he might, gain her expressions of gratitude and admiration as he might, that was the most. There was always a reserve about her which held his fiery feelings in check. His was not a nature, either to check and control its own strong passions, or to give up an object upon which they were once set.

A settled gloom came over his olive face, and his eyes burned like smoldering fires beneath their black brows. He no longer had pleasant remarks to make; no longer brought daily gifts of fish, birds, berries, squirrels, venison, or grapes to Alice; no longer tried to break down her reserve; he just worked—worked constantly, perseveringly, moodily.

Alice herself was scarcely more gay. He guessed whose image filled her mind, when she sat so long without moving, looking off at the frost-tinted forests; and the thought was bitterness.

It was necessary for Captain Wilde to go again to some settlement down the river, to get hinges, locks, window-sashes, glass, etc., for the new house, which was to be ready for those finishing touches, by the time of his return. He did not know, when he set out, whether he would go as far as Center City, or stop at some smaller point nearer home.

One day, about the time of his expected return, Ben had gone for Alice, to get her opinion about some part of house. They stood together, on the outside, consulting about it, so interested in the detail that they neither of them noticed the boat upon the river, until it was moored to the bank, and the voice of the ruffian was heard calling to them.

Ben turned at the same moment and saw that Philip Moore was in company with Mr. Wilde. Ben's eyes fixed themselves steadily upon Alice's face, which was first pale and then red. It was the great throb her heart gave, heard the sudden catch in her breath; and he was still looking at her when Philip sprang gayly up the path and seized her hand—the man who loved her better than life saw all the blushes of womanhood coming and going upon her face at the touch of another's hand.

A threatening blackness clouded his brow; Alice saw it and

knew that he read her secret by the light of his own passion; she almost shuddered at the dark look which he flashed upon Philip; but her father was calling for assistance to unload his craft, and Ben went forward without speaking.

"What a surly fellow that is, for one so good-looking and young," remarked Philip, carelessly, looking after him.

"He is not always so surly," Alice felt constrained to say in his defense; "he's vexed now about something."

"But that's an ill-tempered look for a youthful face, Alice. I'm afraid he'd hardly make a woman very happy—h, Alice?"

"That's a matter which does not interest me, Mr. Moore, I assure you," answered the young girl, with an unexpected flush of pride.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COLD HOUSE-WARMING.

"It's an ill wind dat blows nobody no good; and dat yar wind dat blowed de fire right down on our cabin did us some good ater all. Masser 'ull libble in dat log house till de day he died, hadn't been for dat fire dat frightened me so, and made me pray fass'er 'n eber I prayed afore. Lor! Miss Alice, it look like de judgment-day, when we sailed down de river in de light ob de pine-wood. 'Peared to me de world was on fire. I see Saturn a shakin' in his boots. He tole me, nex' day, he thought it was de day of judgment, sure 'nuff. I heard him askin' de good Lord please forgib him for all de losses he'd taken unbeknown. My! my! I karfed myself to pieces when I thought of it arterward, ca'se I'd never known where de losses went to hadn't been for dat fire. Dis new house mighty like. Ben didn't forget ole niggers when he built dis—de kit hen, an' my settin'-room is mighty comfor'able. Ben's a hand'y young man—smart as a basket o' chips. He's good in all for anybody, but he's not good 'nuff for my pickin'anny, and I know not to hab sense 'nuff to see it. Yeld best beketted, Miss Alice: he's like tempered, an' he'll make trouble. I's use to dat speakin'; I know ye've allers been so discreet and as honest as an angel. None can blame you, let what will happen. But I wish dat Mr. Moore would go away. Yes, I do, Miss Alice. I'm not a general on. Don't tink ole Pal is not soon to be a general. It less ways to leb any peace of mind b' hind him, he'll get it clear out soon. Thar! thar, chile, he'll be in de chile. My! how party you has made de table look. I'm makin' out for yer assistance, darlin'. I'se bound to hab a splendid supper, de fast in de new house. 'Tain't much of a house-warmin', seem' we'd nobody to invite, and no fiddle, but we've done what we could to make things pleasant. Laws! ef dat nigger

ob mine wasn't such a fool he could make a fiddle, and play cuttin' for us, times when we was low-spirited."

Pallas' tongue did not go any faster than her hands and feet. It was the first day in the new house, and Alice and herself had planned to decorate the principal apartment, and have an extra nice supper. Ever since her father left for the mill, in the middle of the day, after the furniture was moved in, while Pallas put things "to rights," she had woven wreaths of evergreens, with scarlet berries and brilliant autumn leaves interspersed, which she had fastened about the windows and doors; and now she was busy decorating the table, while the old colored woman passed in and out, adding various well-prepared dishes to the feast.

Pallas had been a famous cook in her day, and she still made the best of the materials at her command. A large cake, nicely frosted, and surrounded with a wreath, was one of the triumphs of her skill. A plentiful supply of preserved strawberries and wild plum marmalade, grape-jelly, and blackberry-jam adorned the board. A venison pie was baking in the oven, and a salmon, that would have roused the envy of Delmonico's, was boiling in the pot, while she prepared a sauce for it, for which, in this country, she had received many a compliment.

Philip had been taken into the secret of the feast, as Alice was obliged to depend upon him for assistance in getting evergreens. He was now out after a fresh supply, and Alice was beginning to wish he would make more haste, lest her father should return before the preparations were complete.

Again and again she went to the door to look out for him, and at last, six o'clock being come and past, she said, with a pretty little frown of vexation:

"There's father coming, an' Mr. Moore not back?"

The last waited until seven - eight - and yet Philip had not returned.

Several of the men who had been busy about the house during the day were invited in to supper; and at eight o'clock they sat down to it, in something of silence and apprehension, for every one by this time had come to the conclusion that Philip was lost in the woods. Poor Alice could not force herself to eat. She tried to smile as she waited upon her guests; but her face grew paler and her eyes larger every moment. Not that there was any such great cause for flight; there were no wild animals in the vicinity, except an occasional hungry bear in the spring, who had made his way from some remote forest; but she was a woman, timid and living, and her fears kept painting terrible pictures of death by starvation, fierce wolves, sly panthers, and all the horrors of darkness.

"Pon! pon! didn't I don't look so scared," said her father, though he was evidently hurrying his meal, and quite unconscious of the perfection of the salmon sauce, "ther's no cause. He's lost; but he can't get so far in the wrong direction but we'll rouse him

out with our horns and lanterns and guns. We'll load our rifles with powder and fire 'em off. He hasn't had time to get fur."

"Likely he'll make his own way back time we're through supper," remarked one of the men, cheerfully, as he helped himself to a second large piece of venison-pie. "Tain't no use to be in a hurry. These city folks can't find that way in the woods like like us fellers, though. They ain't up to it."

Alice looked over at the speaker; and, albeit she was usually so hospitable, wished he *could* make more speech with his eating. Pallas waited upon the table in profound silence. Something was upon her mind; but when Alice looked at her anxiously, she turned her eyes away, pretending to be busy with her duties.

Ben Perkins had been asked to supper, but did not make his appearance until it was nearly over. When he came in he did not look anybody straight in the face, but sitting down with a reckless, jovial air, different from his usual taciturn manner, began laughing, talking, and eating, filling his plate with every thing he could reach.

"Have you seen any thing of Mr. Moore?" was the first question put to him, in the hope of hearing from the absent man.

"Moore? no—ain't he here? Thought of course he'd be here makin' himself a 'reeable to the women;" and he laughed.

Whether Alice's excited state exalted all her perceptions, or whether her ears were more finely strung than those around her, this laugh, short, dry, and forced, chilled her blood. He did not look toward her as he spoke, but her gaze was fixed upon him with a kind of fascination; she could not turn it away, but sat staring at him, as if in a dream. Only once did he lift his eyes while he sat at the table, and then it was toward her; they slowly lifted as if her own fixed gaze drew them up; she saw them scarcely for an instant, and—such eyes! His soul was in them, although he knew it not—a fallen soul—and the covert look of it through those lurid eyes was dreadful.

A strange tremulousness now seized upon Alice. She hurried her father and his men in their preparations, brought the lanterns, the rifles, the powder-horns; her hands shaking all the time. They laughed at her for a foolish child; and she said nothing, only to hurry them. Ben was among the most eager for the search. He led a party which he proposed should strike directly back into the wood; but two or three insisted best to go in another direction, so as to cover the whole ground. When they had all disappeared in the wood, their lights flashing here and there through openings and their shots ringing through the darkness, Alice said to Pallas:

"Let us go too. There is another lantern. You won't be afraid, will you?"

"I'll go, to please you, chile, for I see yer mighty restless. I don't like trabeling in de woods at night, but de Lord's ober all, and I'll pray fas' and loud if I get skeered."

A phantasm floated in the darkness before the eyes of Alice, all through that night spent in wandering through forest-depths, but it was shapeless, and she would not, dared not, give shape to it. All night guns were fired, and the faithful men pursued their search; and at daybreak they returned, now really alarmed, to refresh their exhausted powers with strong coffee and a hasty-prepared breakfast, before renewing their exertions.

The search became now of a different character. Convinced that the missing man could not have got beyond the hearing of the clamor they had made through the night, they now anticipated some accident, and looked closely into every shadow and under every clump of fallen trees, behind logs, and into hollows.

Drinking the coffee which Pallas forced upon her, Alice again set forth, not with the others, but alone, walking like one distract, darting wild glances hither and thither, and calling in an impassioned voice that wailed through the wilderness, seeming to penetrate every breath of air,—“ Philip! Philip!”

At last she saw where he had broken off evergreens the day before, and fluttering round and round the spot, like a bird crying after its robbed nest, she sobbed,—“ Philip! Philip!”

And then she saw him, sitting on a log, pale and haggard-looking, his white face stained with blood and his hair mottled with it, a frightful gash across his temple and head, which he dropped upon his hand; and he tried to answer her. Before she could reach him he sunk to the ground.

“ He is dead!” she cried, flying forward, sinking beside him and pressing his head to her knee. “ Father! father! come to us.”

They heard her sharp cry, and, hastening to the spot, found her, pale as the body at her feet, gazing down into the deathly face.

“ Alice, don’t look so, child—He’s not dead—he’s only fainted. Here, men, lift him up speedily, he’s nigh about gone. That’s been mischis here—no mistake!”

Captain Wible breathed hard as he glared about upon his men. The thought had occurred to him that some one had attempted to murder the young man for his valuable watch and chain and the well-filled purse he was supposed to carry. But no—the watch and money were undisturbed;—may be he had fallen and lost his head—if he should revive, they would know all.

They bore him to the house and laid him upon Alice’s white boudoir in the pretty room just arranged for her comfort; it was the quietest, pleasantest place in the house, and she would have been there. After the administration of a powerful dose of brandy the faint pulse of the wounded man fluttered up a little stronger; more was given him, the blood was wiped away, and cool, wet napkins kept around his head; and by noon of the same day, he was able to give some account of himself.

He was sitting in the very spot where they had found him on the previous afternoon, with a heap of evergreens gathered about him, preoccupied in making garlands, so that he saw

nothing, heard nothing until something—it seemed to him a club wielded by some assailant who had crept behind him—struck him a blow which instantly deprived him of his senses. How long he lay, bleeding and stunned, he could only guess; it seemed to be deep night when he recalled what had happened and found himself lying on the ground, confused by the pain in his head and faint from loss of blood. He managed to crawl upon the log, so as to lean his head upon his arms, and lay there many hours. He heard the shouts and saw the lights which came near him two or three times, but he could not call them enough to attract attention. When he heard Alice's voice, he had lifted himself into a sitting posture, but the effort was too great, and he sank again, exhausted, at the moment relief reached him.

His hearers looked in each other's faces as they heard his story. Who could have done that murderous deed? What was the object? The pleasant young stranger had no enemies—he had not been robbed; there were no Indians known to be about, and Indians would have finished their work with the scalping-knife.

Alas! the terrible secret preyed at the heart of Alice Wilde. She knew, though no mortal lips had revealed it, who was the would-be murderer. A pair of eyes had unconsciously betrayed it. She had read "*murder*" there, and the wherefore was now evident.

Yet she had no proof of that of which she was so conscious. Should she denounce the guilty man, people would ask evidence of his crime. What would she have to offer?—that the criminal loved her, and she loved the victim. No! she would keep the gnawing truth in her own bosom, only whispering a warning to the sufferer should he ever be well enough to need it; a matter by no means settled, as David Wilber was doctor enough to know. Despite all the preventives within reach, a fever set in that night, and for two or three days, Philip was very ill, a part of the time delirious; there was much more probability of his dying than in recovering. Both Mr. Wilber and Philip had then been picked up by the necessity of being doctors to all kinds of diseases around them; and they exerted themselves to the utmost for their unfortunate young guest.

Then it was that Mr. Wilber found where the heart of his little girl had gone astray; and cursed him under his breath in exposing her to a danger so probable. Yet, as he did so, he could not but believe that the hand of the presiding wisdom on earth was most benign for her, and that Philip would free her honorably and worthily. If she must love, and be married, he would more willingly resign her to Philip Moore than to any other man. Alice lacked experience as a nurse, but she followed every motion of the good old colored woman, and stood ready to interfere where she could be of any use.

Sitting hour after hour by Philip's bedside, changing the wet cloths constantly to keep them cool, she heard words from his delirious lips which added still more to her despair--sordid, passionate words, addressed not to her but to some beloved woman, some fair child "Virginia," now far away, unconscious of her lover's danger, while to her fell the sad pleasure of attending upon him.

"Oh, that he may live, and not die by the hand of an assassin, so I can return to a needless jealousy. Oh, that he may live to save this Virginia, whatever she may be, from the fate of a lifeless mourner. It will be joy enough for me to save his life," she cried to herself.

The crisis passed; the flush of fever was succeeded by the languid palor of extreme prostration; but the young man's condition was excellent, and he recovered rapidly. Then how it was! Philip used to cook him trapping dishes; and how it pleased Alice to see the appetite with which he disposed of them. Women love to save those who are dear to them; no service can be so lonely or so small that their enthusiasm does not exalt it.

Yet the stronger Philip grew, the more heavily pressed a cold horror upon the soul of Alice. Ben Perkins had not been to the house since the wounded man was brought into it; and when Alice would have asked her father of his whereabouts, her lips refused to form his name. She hoped that he had fled; but then she knew that if he had disappeared, her father would have mentioned it, and that the act would have fixed suspicion upon him. She felt that he was hovering about, that he often beheld her, when she was unaware of the secret gaze; she could not endure to step to the door after dark, and she closed the curtains of the windows with extreme care, especially in Philip's room.

The last night of November had fallen when the invalid was able to step all day; but, although he knew that his long absence had been a source of incision among his friends at Center City, and that business at home required his attention, he found each day of his convalescence so pleasant, that he had not strength of will sufficient to break the charm. To read to his young friend while she slept; to watch herittier about the room while he reclined upon a lounge; to talk with her; to study her changing countenance, grew every day more sweet to him. At first he thought it was gentle; she had been so kind to him. But a lurking warlike always gathered about his heart when he recalled all the past; his voice, crying "I am the plowman with such a plow sound--' Philip! Philip!"

Feeling himself thus disposed to her, he was the more charmed to perceive that Alice was anxious to have him go; she gave him no invitation to prolong his visit, and said unequivocally, that if he did not wish to be ice-bound for the winter, he would have to depart as soon as his strength would permit. Her

father had promised him, when he came up, to take him down the river again when he was ready, as he should be obliged to go down again for winter stores; and he now awaited his visitor's movements.

No words had passed between Alice and Pallas on the subject of the attempted murder, yet the former had known that the truth was guessed by the faithful servant who also hastened the departure of their guest.

"I declare, Aunt Pallas, I believe I have worn out my welcome. I've been a troublesome fellow, I know; but it isn't my vanity to see you getting so tired of me," he said, languorously, one day, when they were alone together, he sitting on the kitchen steps after the lazy manner of convalescents, trying to get warmth, both from the fire within and the sun without.

"Ole folks never gets tired of young, bright feller, Mass'r Philip. But ole folks knows sometimes what's for the best, more'n young ones."

"Then you think Miss Alice want's to get rid of me, and you second your darling's wishes—oh, Pallas!" and he looked at her, hoping she would contradict him.

"I'd do a'mos' any thing for my pickaninny—I libber better den life; an' dar' never was another such a child, so pretty and so good, as I know as has been with her sev'rs, and now her firs' bref. If I thought she wanted you to go, I'd want you to go too, miss'r, not meanin' any disrespect—and she do want you to go; but she's got reason for it;" and she shook her yellow turban reflectively.

"Do you think she is getting to dislike me?"

"Dat's her own biness, ef she is; but dat ain't de main reas' son. She don't like the look of that red scar down your bottil. She knows who made dat ugly scar, and what for they did it. She tinks dis a *dangerous* country for you, Masser Moore, and Pallas tink so too. Go way, masser, quick as you can, and neber come back any more."

"But I *shall* come back, Aunt Pallas, next spring, to bring you something nice for all you've done for me, and because—because—I shan't be able to stay away," he answered, though somewhat startled and puzzled by her reproof.

"Why not be able to stay 'way?" queried she, with a sharp glance.

"Oh, you can guess, Aunt Pallas. I shan't tell you."

"People isn't allers satisfied with guessin'—I used to have things plain, and no mistake 'bout 'em," observed Pallas.

"Just so. I am not satisfied with guessing who tried to kill me, and what their object was. I am going to ask Alice this evening. She's evidently frightened about me; she won't let me stir a step alone. So you think your pickaninny is the best and prettiest child alive, do you?"

"Dat I do."

"So do I. What do you suppose she thinks of such a worthless kind of a person as myself? Do, now, tell me, won't you, auntie?"

"You cl'ar out, young master, and don't bozzer me. I'se busy wid dis ironin'. You'd better ask her, if yer want to find out."

"But can't you say something to encourage me?"

"You go 'long. Better tease somebody hain't got no ironin' on hand."

"You'll repent of your unkindness soon, Aunt Pallas; for, be it known to you, to-morrow is set for my departure, and when I'm gone it will be too late to send your answer after me;" and the young master rose, with a very becoming air of injured feeling which delighted her much.

"Hi! hi! ef it could only be," she sighed, looking after him. "But we can't smoof' things out in dis yere worl' quite so easy as I smoof' out dis table cloth. He's one ob de family, no mistake; and master's found it out, too, 'fore dis."

That night the family sat up late, Pallas busy in the kitchen putting up her master's changes of linen and cooked provisions for the next day's journey, and the master himself busied about many small affairs claimin' his attention.

The two young people sat before a blazing wool-fire in the front room; the settle had been drawn up to it for Philip's convenience, and his companion, at his request, had taken a seat by his side. The curtains were closely drawn, yet Alice would frequently look around in a timid, wild way, which he could not but notice.

"You did not use to be so timid."

"I have more reason now;" and she shuddered. "Until you were here, Mr. Moore, I did not think how near we might be to murderers, even in our house."

"You should not allow it to make such an impression on your mind. It is passed; and such things scarcely happen twice in one person's experience."

"I do not fear for myself—it is for you, Mr. Moore."

"Philip, you called me, last night in the woods. Supposing I was in danger, little Alice, what would you risk for me?"

She did not answer.

"Well, what would you risk for some one you loved—say, your father?"

"All things—my life."

"There are some people who would rather risk their life than their pride, their family name, or their money. Supposing I had a law to a very much, and she professed to return his love, but was not willing to share his meager fortunes with him; could not sacrifice splendor and the passion for admiration, for his sake—what would you think of her?"

"That she did not love him."

"But you do not know, little Alice; you have never been

tempted; and you know nothing of the strength of fashion in the world, of the influence of public opinion, of the pride of appearances."

"I have guessed it," she answered, sadly.

He thought there was a shadow of reproof in those pure eyes, as if she would have added that she had been made to feel it, too.

"I loved a woman once," he continued; "I loved her so much that I would have let her set her perfect foot upon my neck and press my life out. She knew how I adored her, and she told me she returned my passion. But she would not resign any of her rank and influence for my sake."

"Was her name Virginia?"

"It was; how did you know?"

"You talked of her when you were ill."

"I'll warrant. But she wouldn't have sat up one night by my bedside, for fear her eyes would be less brilliant for the next evening's ball. She drove me off to the West to make a fortune for her to spend, in case she did not get hold of somebody else's by that time. Do you think I ought to make it for her?"

There was no answer. His companion's head was drooping. He lifted one of her hands as he went on:

"I was so dazzled by her magnificence that, for a long time, I could see nothing in its true light. But my vision is clear now. Virginia shall never have my fortune to spend, nor me to twist around her jeweled finger."

The hand he held began to tremble.

"Now, little Alice, supposing I had told you of such love, and you had professed to answer it, what sacrifices would you have made? Would you have given me that little gold heart you wear about your neck—your only bit of ornamentation?"

"I would have made a sacrifice, full as great in its way, as the decline in position and position might have been to the poor lady," she replied, fixing her eyes calmly on his face. "I would have given up the only real happiness I'd ever had in it, I think. I should ever, by my ignorance of propriety, have been a blight to him—if I thought my master was about to be won to some other girl; and he would grow very old as a friend and companion before I was worthy to be his for a place—if I thought I was not worthy of him. I would have given up, and try to wish only for his best happiness."

Her eyes were dim with tears. I stopped to look at her, which would have been the last thing I would have done.

"What say! You are more than a match for any man in the world! All else—for more than worthy of me!" said I. Philip, in a狂喜 tone he could not restrain. "Oh, Alice, if you only loved me in that fashion!"

"You know that I do," she replied, with that archness so native to her, smiling through her tears.

"Then say no more. There—don't speak—don't speak!" and he shut her mouth with the first kiss of a lover.

For a while their hearts beat too high with happiness to recall any of the difficulties of their new relation.

"We still have small time to lay plans for the future, now. But I shall fly to you on the first breezes of spring, Alice. Your father shall know all on our way down the river. Oh, if there was only a mill through this forlorn region. I could write to you, at least."

"I shall have so much to do, the winter will speedily pass; I must study the books you brought me. But I shall not allow myself to hope too much," she added, with a sudden melancholy, such as sometimes is born of prophetic instinct.

"I can not hope too highly!" said Philip, with enthusiasm. "Here comes your father. Dear Alice, your cheeks are so rosy I believe he will read our secret to-night."

CHAPTER VII.

SUSPENSE.

WHAT was the consternation of Alice when her father came back the evening of the day of his departure and told her he had concluded he could not be spared for the trip, and so, when they reached the mill, he had chosen Ben to fill his place! Every vestige of color fled from her face.

"Oh, father, how could you trust him with Philip?" burst forth involuntarily.

"Trust him? Why, child, thar ain't a handier sailor round the place. And if he won't, I guess Moore could take care of him. If—ain't me a craft equal to an old salt."

"Can't you go after them, father? Oh, do go, now, this night—this hour!"

"Why, child, you're crazy!" replied the ruffian, looking at her in surprise. "I never saw you so foolish before. Go after a crew of young chaps full-grown and able to take care of themselves? Thar's the only silliest thare is, besides—ah! I wouldn't I should break my old arms rowing after 'em when I have to take a day's start." And he laughed coldly. "Now, child, here, I can tell you're beyond a fool."

She was very silent on her way west. There would be no use, she thought, in telling her father the confidence of her intentions. It would be if the old fashioned this misfortune. Several of the boats had got into a quandle, at the mill, that morning; some of the machinery had broken, and so much business pressed upon the owner, that he had been obliged to relinquish his journey. He had selected Ben as his substitute because he was his favorite

among all his employees—trusty, quick, honest, would make a good selection of winter stores, and render a fair account of the money spent. Such had been the young man's character; and the little public of Wilde's mill did not know that a stain had come upon it—that the mark of Cain was severely branded upon the swarthy brow which once could have flashed back honest mirth upon them.

They say "the devil is not so black as he is painted;" and surely Ben Perkins was not so utterly depraved as might be thought. He was a heathen; one of those white heathen, found plentifully in this Christian country, not only in the thick squalor of cities, but in the back depths of sparsely settled country.

He had grown up without the knowledge of religion, as it is taught, except an occasional half-understood sermon sermon from some traveling missionary—he had never been liable to comprehend the beauty of the precepts of Christ—and he had no education which would teach him self-control and the noble principle of self-government. Unhappily, with a high temper and fiery passions, generous and kindly, with a pride of character which would have been fine had it been enlightened, but which descended to envy and jealousy of his superiors in this ignorant boy nature—the good and the bad grew rankly together. From the day upon which he "hit town" a year and a half ago, to Captain Wilde, and saw Alice Wilde, a child of twelve, looking so very up at him through her golden curls, he had loved her. He had worked late and early, saving to please his employer, shown himself hardy, courageous, and trusty—had done extra jobs that he might accumulate a little sum to invest in property—all in the hope of some time during to ask her to marry him. Her superior refinement, her innate delicacy, her sweet beauty, were felt by him only to make him love her the more desperately. As the sun fills the ether with warmth and light, so she filled his soul. It was not strange that he was infuriated by the sight of another man stepping in and winning so easily what he had striven for so long—he saw it vividly that Alice would love Philip Moon—this man, and not the straggler, with his fine features. He could not a day live but him. All the world was wedged in him now, and he was an every man's son. He drove fast. If to collect the horses as he passed them, he would be impeded, he would. Then the top of the hill, and the mill in the distance.

Carried past the mill, he stopped, and stood looking at the ground before him, and the road. He had not thought of it, but he had a sudden presentiment. What had he had there! so awfully in consequence that he was glad to hear of the escape of his friend, Victor, or whether he were still to consummate his wish, his own soul only knew.

Everybody at Wilde's mill had remarked the change in him

from a gay youth full of jests and nonsense to a quiet, morose man, working more efficiently than ever, but sullenly rejecting all advances of sport or confidence.

If he were secretly struggling for the mastery over evil, it was a curious fatality which drew him into a quiet and peaceful life, so overwhelming in its ease and security of course as it was.

All well did the unkempt Alice realize how easy now he could follow his intent—how truly in his power was that poor specimen of man, who had already suffered so much from his hands. *Appetite and Sleep forsook her; it's too sleep it was but to dream of a boat gilling down a river, of a strong man raising a weak one in his grasp and hurling him, wounded and helpless, into the waters, where he would sink, sink, till the waves bubbled over his flowing hair, and all was gone.* Many a night she started from her sleep with terrified shrieks, which alarmed her father.

"Taint right for a young girl to be having the nightmare so, Pallas. Suthin' or another is wrong about her—hain't no nerves lately. I do hope she ain't goin' to be one of the screechin', faintheav' kind of wom'n-folks. I detest 'em. Her health can't be good. Do try and find out what's the matter with her; she'll tell you quicker 'an she will me. Fix her up some kind of tea."

"De child ain't well, mass'r; dat's borry plain. She's gettin' thin every day, and she don't eat much to keep up her alive. But it's her *head* messer—pend on it, it's her mind. Desey young gentlewoman make mischeef. Wish I had m'sser Moore under my thumb—I'd give him a scoldin' weed I las' him all his life."

"Cross Philip Moore, and all others of his class," muttered the Captain, moodily.

Both Mr. Winkle and Pallas began to lose their high opinion of the young man, as they witnessed the silent suffering of their daughter. He was going down the river without his expected company and excited Philip out of the revelation he had desired to make; and Alice, with that excessive delicacy of some timid young girls, had not even confided her secret to her good old nurse.

What better it would have been for her peace of mind had she told all to her friends—her love and her fears. Then, if they had so good reason for her apprehensions, they might have done their duty down at whatever road-side, or up at cross-roads. But she did not do it. She sat there, a silent, tearful, pained, where it but for fear of Alice's secret.

There was no time to go up to the village of Winkle, and the lower country, and in the wild, broken, broken ice, to be sent off. The boy had a boat, but it was broken, in the midst of which the two voyagers had sought it, were over, and ice closed the river the very day after the return of Ben.

A sudden agony of hope and fear convulsed the heart of Alice, when her father entered the house one day, and announced Ben's arrival.

"Did he not bring me a letter? Was there no letter for you, father?"

It would be so natural that he should write, at least to her father, some message of good wishes and announcement of his safe journey—if she could see his own handwriting, she would be satisfied that all was well.

"That's none for me. If Ben got a letter for you, I suppose he'll tell you so, as he's coming in with such things."

"Have you any thing for me—any message for father?"

It was the first time she had met Ben, face to face, since the never-to-be-forgotten night of the horse-stealing; but now he looked her in the eyes, without any shrinking, and it appeared to her as if the shadow which had lain upon him was lifted. He certainly looked more cheerful than he had done since the day of Philip's unexpected arrival at the new house. Was it because he felt that an enemy was out of the way? Alice could not tell; she waited for him to speak, as the prisoner waits for the verdict of a jury.

"There ain't any letter, Miss Alice," he replied, "but there's a package—some presents for you, and some for Philip, too, from Mr. Moore. He told me to tell you he was safe and sound, and hoped you'd accept the things he sent."

His eyes did not quail as he made this statement, though he knew that she was searching them keenly. Perhaps there was a letter in the bundle. She carried it to her own room and tore it open. No! not a single written word. The girls for the old servant—silk aprons, gay-colored turbans, and a string of coral beads—were in one bundle. In another was a lady's dressing-case, with brushes, perfumeries, and all those pretty trifles which grace the feminine toilet, a quantity of fine writing materials, paper-folder, gold-pen, some exquisitely small engravings, and, in a tiny box, a ring set with a single purple pearl. That ring was it indeed a betrothal ring, sent to her by her lover, when?—so should I wear to kiss and pray over? or was it intended to bind her into a bond with his murderer? Luckily she had a tiny bit of wrapping paper to find some proof that it was Philip's own hand which had made up the costly and tasteless gifts. She could find nothing to satisfy her. They didn't have a ring clasped with his money, but one by him. The ring which she would have worn so joyfully had she been certain it had come from him, she put back into its case without even trying it on her finger.

"Oh, God!" she murmured, throwing herself upon her knees, "can I bear this suspense all this endless winter?"

Yes, all that endless winter the weight of suspense was not to be lifted—not for yet more miserable months.

December set in extremely cold, and the winter throughout was one of unusual severity.

As the Christmas holidays drew near, that time of feasting so

precious to the colored people raised in "ole Virginny," Saturn bestirred himself a little out of his perpetual laziness. If he would give due assistance in beating eggs and grinding spices, chopping saet and picking fowls, as well as "keep his wife in kin and wold," Pallas promised him rich rewards in the way of dainties, and also to make him his favorite dish—woolback pie.

"Dar' to gracious, I don't feel a fit of heart 'bout fixin' up festivesses us vere Christmas," said she to him, one evening, in the midst of the bustle of preparation. "We've alays been Christian folks 'muf to keep Christ-mas, even in de wildness; but what's de use of cookin' and cookin' and dar's Mrs. Alice don't eat as much as dat frozen chick I brought in and put in dat basket by de fire."

"Be dar's master, to eat well 'muff, and I—Use mighty hungry dese days. Don't stop cookin', Pallas."

"You ain't got no more feelin's dea a common nigger, Saturn. Nobody'd think you was born fit up in one de best families. If I could only think of somethin' new dat would coax up pickaninny's appetite a little!"

"Praps she'll eat some my woolback pie," suggested Saturn.

It was a great self-denial for him to propose to share a dish which he usually reserved especially to himself, but he, too, felt as tender as his organism would permit, toward his youthful mistress.

"Our missis eat woolback pie! You go 'long, Saturn; she wouldn't stone it. Dat's master's dish. I deen'er our chile be dis woolback just as missis did dat year afore she died. I be worried 'bout her."

"Does you? Melba she's got de rheumatiz or de neurology. I got de rheumatiz badays it dis week pas'. With you'd fix up some of yer liniment, won't you?"

"Well, well, everybody has her troubles, even innocent ones like our chile. Dis is a wicked and a perworse generation, and dat is de reason our woolback fire a. Our house burn up, and now our dear chile mus' go break her heart 'bout somebody as won't say well her last's her lot. She'll go of course an' die as missis went. Lord! what a thought our family would be to me to see a man like I be now! when Mr. Carter Moore come to plantations, he's got his self clumbby but I am all I am, and I keep as close as we can, with the old family, and I am to New York. M'Lord! it's with all of us to take care of us, and we are all to be a burden to our old master, and we all will be a burden to him, and he'll be dead before he'll be a hundred. What I think of all de chile I has and de dainties as I use to make, and is eat, for Christmas, I don't feel like heart for to fit' dis choppin' knife and all time!"

Yet the preparations progressed, and on Christmas and New

Year's day the men at the mill were supplied with a feast; but Alice could not bring herself to decorate the house with wreaths of evergreen, according to custom—it brought back hateful fears too vividly. The unceasing cry of her heart was for the river to open. She counted the hours of the days which must drag into weeks and months.

Ben now came frequently to the house. If Alice would not talk to him, he would make himself agreeable to the old servants; any thing for an excuse to linger about where he could obtain glimpses of the face growing so sick and white. Mr. Wilde had always favored him as a work-hawk, and used to invite him often to his home. He hoped that even Ben's company would amuse his daughter and draw her away from her "love-sickness."

It was a few weeks after the holidays that, one evening, Mr. Wilde took Alice upon his knee, smoothing her hair as if she were a baby, and looking fondly into her face.

"I've some curious news for you, little one," he said, with a smile. "Would you believe that any one had been thinking of my little cub for a wife, and had asked me if he might talk to her about it?"

"Was it Ben, father?"

"Yes, it was Ben. No doubt you know of it before I've aisy place?"

"I refused him long ago, father. Didn't he tell you that?"

"No."

"Would you be willing I should intrude upon him?"

"No, not willing. Once I'd have set him at it if he'd had the impudence to mention it. But you're right, Alice. You're so lonesome and so shut up here. I know how it is. The young must have their mates; at least—want him. I shan't make any serious objection. He's the best there is in these parts. He's better than a battering-ram. I know, Alice. I was fool enough once to imagine you'd never marry, but live your lifetime with yer old father; but I ought to have known better. Tain't the way of the world. I was in my way, not your mother's way. No, Alice, if ever you have a love to marry, unless I know the man's a villain, I shall make no objection. Ben loves you, may be, deeply. A girl should give two thoughts before she throws away such a love as his. Tain't every man is capable of it."

"But I'm engaged to Philip Moore, father. We have each other." Her blushing cheek was pressed against his, that he might not see it.

"Alice, my child," said the father, in a voice full of pity and tenderness, "Mr. Moore is a rascal. He may have told you that. I know it well enough. He don't intend to marry you. He's a d—froz'd aristocrat!" waxing wrathful as he went on. "There! there! don't you feel hurt; I know

all about him. Knewt he made fun of us, after all we'd done for him, in his store down to Center City, when he d'ln't know Ben was Es'cial. Besides, he advised Ben to marry you, to keep you from breakin' your heart about him; said you expected him back in the spring, but he was goin' on East to marry a girl there. So you see you can't think no more of that rascally fellow, Alice. If he ever does come back here I'll whip him."

"Ben tell you this?" cried Alice, her eyes flashing fire and her white lips quivering. "And you believed the infamous lie, father? Not, not! Ben has *never* left him, father—he has married my Philip, and has invented this lie to prevent our expecting him. Oh Philip!"—her excitement overpowered her and she fainted in her father's arms.

Now that the tension of suspense had given way, and she deemed herself certain of the fate of her lover, she yielded for a time to the long smothered agony within her, going from one fainting fit to another all through that wretched night.

The next day, when composed enough to talk, she told her father all—Ben's elder of marriage, his threats, the circumstantial evidence which fixed the guilt of the assault in the woods upon him, and her belief now that Philip had been made away with. The rascismen himself was stretch'd out to quiet and courage his child, he promised to set off, by to-morrow, upon the ice, and slide down to Center City, that her fears might be dispelled or confirmed. But that very night the weather, which had been growing warm for a week, melted into rain, and the ice became too rotten to trust. There was nothing to do but to wait.

"Tain't by no means certain he's done such a horrible thing. And if you'll pick up courage to think so, and make yerself as easy as you can, I'll start the very first day it's possible. Likely in March the sprair'll open. You may go along with me, too, if you wish, so as to learn the news as soon as I do. I'll say nothing of my suspicions to young Perkins, but try to treat him the same as ever, till I know he deserves different."

CHAPTER VIII.

AWAY FROM HOME.

A QUAIANT party were to be seen passing through some of the streets of Center City one April day of the following spring. A tall and vigorous man, with a keen, intelligent face, clad in a calico shirt, a blue woollen hunter's frock and buckskin breeches, strode on as if anxious to reach his destination; or, rather, as if used to making good time over endless prairies and through unsurveyed forests. By his side walked a young girl

whose dress, though of the best materials, was antique as our grandmother's; a broad brimmed hat shaded a face the liveliest ever beheld in that city; her little slippers with their silver buckles peeped out from beneath her short frock. Those who were fortunate enough to see her as she passed did not know which to admire most—the exquisite, unstudied grace of her manners, which was as peculiar as her beauty, or the simple innocence of her expression. She kept pace with her companion, looking gravely forward with those great blue eyes, only occasionally giving the crowd a fawn-like, startled look, when it pressed too near. A few paces behind trudged an amateur colored couple, the man short, and white-eyed, rolling smiles as he passed, evidently supposing all the attention of the spectators to be concentrated on his flaming vest, his flowered coat, and bran-new boots; the woman a perfect black Jem, really superb in her air and physique, wearing her newly-fab'd yellow turban as if it were a golden crown. She seldom took her eyes off the young mistress whom she followed, except occasionally to frown at some impudent fellow who stared too hard.

The group wended their way onward until they reached the names of "Raymond & Moore," in gilt letters over a new four-story brick store of this thriving new town, and here they disappeared from the view of outsiders.

"Captain Wilde! how do you do? You're down early this spring. Well, the mill's waiting for you to find it. Come down on a raft?"

"Yes, Mr. Raymond, a thundering big one. Bring'd my family this time to give 'em a chance to pick out a few things for themselves. My daughter, sir."

The merchant gave the young lady a chair. She took it mechanically, but her heart, her eyes, were asking questions of the smiling, curious man, the friend and partner of her own Philip, who for the first time began to suspect the cause which had kept the latter so long, "hunting and fishing," up at Moore's mill. Could he look so smiling, so assured, and her Philip be dead? The cry: "Where is he?" trembled suddenly on her lips.

"Yes, a thundering big raft we got out this spring. We'd choppers to work all winter," continued the raftsmen, walking along further from his daughter, and speaking with apparent carelessness. "By the way, where's Mr. Moore? Did he get home safe, after his spell of sickness, at our house last fall?"

"Oh, yes! he got home safe and in fine spirits. He was soon as well or better than ever. I expect he got pretty good care," and the merchant glanced over at the young girl respectfully.

Mr. Raymond was a good-hearted, kindly, and learned man; but if he had been gross or impure, or not overflowing with fondness for a jest, there was something about him father and child to suppress all feelings but those of respect and wondering admiration. Alice Wilde's beauty was of a kind to defy

criticism. She might have worn sackcloth and ashes, or flannel and thick boots, or a Turkish dress, or a Puritan maiden's, or a queen's robe, it would have made but small difference; her loveliness was of that overmastering kind which draws the hearts of men and women, and makes every man feel, in her presence, forgetful of every lesser consideration, lo! here is a beautiful woman! Such beauties as hers have had great power whenever they have been found—they have exalted peasant women to thrones, and men of genius and rank, as if they were children, bicker and titter. It is not strange that Alice's personal loveliness, added to her still more unusual unconsciousness of it, and infantile innocence, should at once have commanded the reverence of people of the world, in spite of the quaintness of manner and attire, in themselves pretty and pleasant.

Although her father had spoken in a low voice, Alice had heard his question and the answer. The splendor of happiness broke over her countenance—blushes rose to her cheeks and sparkled to her eyes; she hardly dared to glance in any direction but she should see her lover unexpectedly, and betray her joy to strangers.

"Is he about the store this morning; or will I have to go to the mill to see him?" asked the raftsmen.

"You will not see him at all, this trip, I'm afraid. Mr. Moore has gone on East; he's been away several weeks now and I hardly know when to expect him. He was called there quite unexpectedly, upon business connected with his uncle, and their estates in England. It would not surprise me at all if he should bring a bride home—that is, if he can persuade his fair cousin that the West is not such a terrible savage wilderness as she supposes."

Mr. Renshaw was perfectly honest in this remark. He knew the Virginian Moore used to be the idol of his friend; and as Philip had not communicated the change in his ideas, he still supposed that Philip was only waiting to get rich enough to go home and marry her; and as Philip was now doing so well with his western enterprise, he had planned it all out in his own imagination—fortune, acceptance, and the happy time of a grand wedding. He could not help looking over at the pretty forster girl, to see how she received the news, but the portly person of the colored woman had come between. Aha, and he could not see her face.

"Laws, Miss Alice, do you see them yere callkers—they're guid! Look at that red one with the blue flowers—it ain't so bad as that though, as this with the yellow. My! my! that's a jolly girl—plasses the way. Yer feller ought to take yer in a cab, I tell ye. Young girls likes them places. Laws, darlin', come off square with New York City. Less have a drink of water, and step over de street."

All this volubility was to screen the young girl from scrutiny

A pitcher of water stood on the counter, near her, and she poured a glass for her mistress. But Alice waved the glass away, and rose without any signs of grief and pain in her face; but the expression had changed—an icy pride compassed every feature; she asked the merchant to show her some of his goods in a clear, low tone, as sweet as it was passionless. Her hand did not tremble as she turned over the silks and laces.

"Good for her! She's got her father's grit," thought the raftsmen to himself, while his own throat swelled almost to choking with anger and grief, and he felt that if he only met Philip Moore within sight he would have the satisfaction of thrashing a little conscience into him.

Neither he nor Alice any longer doubted the statement of Ben Perkins. Mr. Moore had ridiculed them—had mockingly given another permission to console her whom he had forsaken—but said that he was going East to marry a more fit companion. As the raftsmen looked in the quiet face of his chub, which repelled sympathy with a woman's pride—that pride so terrible because it covers such tortured sensibilities—his blood boiled up with ungovernable rage. He was not accustomed to controlling his sentiments upon any subject.

"Let them fumigated fixin's alone, Alice," he said, taking her hand and drawing her away. "Men that make it a business to handle that sort of thing, grow about as thin as their wives. I despise 'em. I want you to understand, Mr. Raynor, that all connection between me and this firm, business or other, is dissolved. I won't even take your cased laundry. When Mr. Moore returns, tell him that the laws of hospitality prevail. If your four-story bricks ain't known in s'pects o' this, and if he ever comes on my premises again I'll consider myself at liberty to shoot him down for a dog; and before the surprised merchant could reply, he had strode forth.

"Come 'long, Saturn! don't stan' dar' starin'; don't yer see masser's gone? I shall be sorry I brung ya yer long o' you. I'll behave with more propisitionsness. What dar'sposis'ns? I tink your missis and masser is, if you don't act like chist. My nigger? If yer don't do eright to Miss Alice, I'll never bring you 'way from home ag'in;" and Pallas took "her nigger" by the elbow and drew him away from the fascinating array of dry-goods and ready-made clothing.

That afternoon Captain Wilke and his daughter sat in a little private sitting-room of the hotel, overlooking the street. Every thing was novel to Alice. This was also truly her first experience away from her forest home. Yet up in all the busy, bustling scene beneath her, she gazed with vacant eyes.

About the rapid rise and growth of some of our western cities there is an air peculiar to themselves—an explosive example in the history of civilization. Started amid scenes of unparallelled beauty, they seem to jar upon and disturb the harmony

Their surroundings; brick and plaster, new shingles, and glowing white paint, unsubdued by time, rise up in the midst of fairy-land; rude wharves just over the silver waters where erst the fleet canoe of the Indian only glided; wild roses flush the hill-sides, crowded with sudden dwellings: stately old forests loom up as backgrounds to the busiest of busy streets. The shrill cry of the steam-whistle startles the dreamy whippowil; the paddle-wheel of the intrusive steamboat frightens the indolent sation from his visions of peace. As the landscape, so the people; curiously mixed of rough and refined. Center City was one of the most picturesque of these young towns; and, at present, one of the most prosperous. Broken-down speculators from the East came thither and renewed their fortunes; and enterprising young men began life with flattering prospects.

It was upon the principal street that Alice sat and looked. Scores of people hurried by, like the waves of the river, past her cabin in the wood. She saw ladies dressed in a fashion differing widely from her own; across the way, in a suit of parlors in the second story, she saw through the open blind, a young girl of about her own age sitting at a musical instrument, lost which she drew, as if by magic, music that held her listening to the golden canaries. New thoughts and aims came into the mind of the fisherman's daughter. Pride was struggling to heal the wounds which love had made.

"Father, why you sent me to school?" For a long time there was silence; his hand was bent upon his head. She crept up to his knee, in her little girl way, and drew away the hand.

"I did it in good' faith work of sixteen a year to send you to one of them boarding schools. They'll teach you plenty of vanity and worse things, my child; they'll make you unfit to be happy and contented with yer plain old father. But ta it you are already. I've made a failure. You're too good for them that's about you, and I'm good enough for them a you wish to be like. Go to school if you want to, child; go, and learn to put on airs and despise those who would give their heart's blood for you. I shall make no objection."

"Do you think I could learn to be so very bad, father? If you can't trust me, I will not go. Do let us say no more about it," and she kissed him.

"There, there, child, I didn't mean to deny ye. But I feel bitter to day—sour and bitter—as I used to in days gone by, when you're like the devil, turned off by them that were ashamed of you. If you'll only keep like yer brother, you may do what you will. I went to school, and she knew more than a dozen languages and all; but it didn't stand her. Maybe I've done wrong in riling you up the way I have—to visit my experience and lay it on you young head. We must all live and learn for ourselves. Go to school, if you want to. I'll try and go along without my little cubbie for a year or two."

"It's hard, father—hard for me—but I wish it." Pride was steeling the heart of the forest maiden. "But are you able, father? Can you pay the expense?"

This thought never came to her till after she had his promise.

"Yes, I'm able—and if it's done, it shall be done in the best style. I haven't cut down all the pine timber I've taken in the last fifteen year, without laying up something for my girl. I want you to dress as well as any you see, and study whatever you like, and play lady to your heart's content. You'd better find a dressmaker, the first thing, and not be stared at every time you step out of the door. Get yourself silks and satins, girl, and hold your head up like the queen of the prairie."

When Captain Wilde returned up the river, he and his wife suite made a melancholy journey; for the light of their eyes, the joy of their hearts, was left behind them.

A young ladies' seminary, "a flourishing young institution beautifully located in a healthy region, with spacious grounds, enjoying the salubrious river-breezes," etc., etc., had prisoned the wild bird of the forest.

"Where's your daughter?" asked Ben Perkins of his employer, when he saw the returning party had without Alice. His face was blanched to a dead-white, for he expected certainly to hear that she had been claimed as bride by Philip Morris.

"Yer story was true, Ben, though I did ye the wrong to doubt it. Alice will never be the wife of that country boy. But she'll never be yours, neither; so you might as well give up, first as last. Go off somewhere, Ben, and find somebody else; that's my advice."

"Look-a-here, Captain Wilde, I know you mean the best, and that my chance is small; but I tell you, sir, just as long as Alice is free to choose, and I've got breath and sense to try for her, I shan't give her up. Never, sir! I'll work my fingers off to serve you and her—I'll wait years—I'll do any thing you ask, only so you won't lay any thing in my way."

The rafesman looked pityingly in the haggard face of the speaker—the face which a year ago was so bright and fresh. He saw working in those dark lavender eyes, in the veins thick coursing under the olive skin, in the glances of the black eyelashes difficult to check, which might turn him in fifteen years to yet other crimes than the one into which he had already been betrayed.

"You're high-tempered, Ben, my boy, and I like to speak to a girl like Alice. She knows what you're up to, and she abominably bad you to do; and I like to tell straight at you, Ben," spoke, whose eyes wavered and sunk to the ground— "I was the first intimation he had had that his girl was a good girl. 'Why not go off, and find some one more like yourself— the pretty, red-cheeked lass who'll think you the best and handsomest

fellow on earth, and be only too happy to marry you? That's plenty such chances—and you'd be a dead happier."

"Don't, don't talk so!" burst forth Ben, impetuously. "I can't do it, and that's the end on't. I've tried to get away, but I'm bound here. It's like as if my feet were tied to this ground. I've done half things in my determination to keep others away. I know it, and I own up to it. I've been desparate—crazy! But I ain't a bad fellow. If Miss Alice would smile upon me, 'pears to me I could be the bad—'pears to me I'd try to get to be as good as she is. Even if she never would marry me, if she'd let me stay round and work for you, and she didn't take up with nobody else, I'd be content. But if I have to give her up entirely, I expect I'll make a pretty man, cap'n. I've all kinds of wicked thoughts about it, and I can't help it. I ain't made of milk and water. I'd rather fight a bear than court a girl. I shan't never ask another woman to have me—no, sir! I'd 'ave made you a good son, if all he'd had been willin'. But if Miss Alice means to make herself a fine lady, to catch some other sweet lady-killer like the one that's given her the mitten, it's her choice. She'll up and marry somebody that won't speak to her old father, I s'pose."

"That's not telling," answered the rat's man, sadly; for in truth, the change in manner of his daughter before he left her, lay like a weight upon his memory and heart. He felt a chord of sympathy binding him to the young man, as if theirs was a common cause. Alice seemed to have receded from them as in a dream, growing more cold and reserved, as she glided into the carriage. Her trouble, instead of drawing her more closely into her father's arms, had torn her from him, and taught her self-control. She had despised her home, had left him to care for himself, while she fitted herself for some sphere into which he could not come. That "sharper than a serpent's tooth—a thankless child," he was tempted to call her. Yet his heart refused such an accusation. She had been suddenly shaken in her present faith in others, had been wounded in pride and deserted in love—and her present mood was the high reaction of the blow. Presently she would be herself again, would come back to her home with her humble friends with the same modest, affectionate, gentle character as of old.

But he would not let her go lonely; he would gratify her love of the beautiful. She should have books, music, fine furniture, the rest. He did not ask him if what all these would be worth without the paramount necessity of the youthful mind—without sleep. Alas! the rat's man, bringing up his lad in such a way! It did not easily then do to fix her heart only upon him—but the little bird had learned to fly, and had gone out into the world, flitting out into the untired world, impelled by the consciousness of wings.

CHAPTER IX.

A ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.

"You are rich, Philip!"

"Yes, Virginia, or soon shall be."

"How like a fairy story it all sounds."

"Or a modern novel."

"We can be happy now, Philip!"

The two young people were leaning over the balustrade of a balcony of the summer residence of Mortimer Moore. The rich moonlight was still permeated with the rosy tinges of sunset; the early dew called out the fragrance of a near meadow in which the grass had been cut that day, and its odors were mingled with the perfumes of roses and lilies in the garden beneath the balcony. It was an hour to intoxicate the souls of the young and loving. If Virginia had been dressing herself for a ball she would not have used more care than she had shown in the simple afternoon toilet she now wore—simple, and yet the result of consummate tact. A single string of pearls lay upon the heavy braids of black hair, an Indian muslin robe, in which were mingled precious perfumes, floated about her form—the white lily leaves falling away from the ivory arms, gave softness to their rounded outlines. A bunch of violets nestled in the soft transparent fabric where it was gathered over her bosom. The creamy tint of her low, smooth forehead just deepened in her cheek to that faint flush which you see in the heart of a ten rose; her straight brows, long lashes, and the deep, dark eyes smiling under them, all showed to wonderful advantage in the delicious light.

As she uttered the last words, she laid her hand lightly upon Philip's arm, and looked up into his face. He was fully aware, at that moment, of her attraction; a smile the meaning of which she could not fully fathom, answered her own, as he said:

"I hope we can be happy, my fair cousin. I expect to be very much blessed as soon as a slight suspense which I can see is done away with."

"Why should you feel suspense, Philip? Every thing is settled upon you."

"I see you are smiling upon me, my beautiful cousin; and that is a great deal, if not every thing. You always promised to smile upon me, you know, if I ever got you; and I made it prudent."

"It seems to me as if there was sarcasm in your voice, Philip. You know that I have always thought more of you than any one else; and if I would not marry you when poor, it was because I dared not. Now we are equal—in fortune, youth, health,

My father is so much better. He was out walking this afternoon; the country air has benefited him. The doctor thinks it may be years before he has another attack. You've been very kind to him, Philip. When our fortunes are joined, we can live almost as we please—as well as I care to live. Won't it be charming?"

The tapering white hand clung down upon his own.

"Very. You remember that trite passage in the *Lady of Lyons*, which the mob, the vulgar crowd, are still disposed to *recite*. Supposing we change the scene from the Lake of Como to the banks of the Hudson—listen, Virginia! how prettily sentiment sounds in this moonshine :

"A palace lifting to eternal summer
I've marble walls, from out a glossy bower
Of coolest foliage, musical with birds,
Whose songs should syllable thy name! At noon
We'd sit beneath the arched vines, and wonder
Why earth should be unhappy, while the heavens
Still left us your sweet love. We'd have no friends
That were not lovers; no ambition, save
To excel in all in love—that we might smile
To think how poorly our race of words
Translates the poetry of hearts like ours.
And when in that case, amidst the broad blue **heavens**,
We'd guess what star should be our home when **love**
Purpos'd to reward; while the perfumed light
Stole through the mist of alabaster lamps,
And every air was heavy with the sighs
Of orange groves and music of sweet lutes,
And reverberations of low tones that rang forth
In the midst of roses! Dost thou like the picture?"

"Go on, Virginia, can't you act your part?"

"Let me see, can I recall it?—

"Oh, as the bee upon the flower, I hang
Upon the honey of thy eloquent tongue;
Am I not best? And if I love too wildly—
Who would not love thee like Virginia?"

"A very passable actress you are, cousin. I'd have thought you really meant that, once, you put such fervor in your voice. But—

"Oh false one!

"It is the *prince* thou lovest, not the *man*."

"Nay, Philip, like Pauline, I must plead that you wrong me. Already, before my father summoned you, before we heard the whisper of your coming fortune, I had resolved to search you out and take back my cruel resolution—more cruel to myself than to you. I found that I had overrated my powers of endurance—that I did not know my own heart. Dear Philip, will you not forgive me? Remember how I was brought up."

Two tears glistened in the moonlight and passed upon his hand. They ought to have melted a stonier susceptibility than his.

"Willingly, Virginia. I forgive you from my heart—and more,

I thank you for that very refusal which you now regret. If that refusal had not driven me into the wilds of the West, I should never have met my perfect ideal of womanhood. But I have found her there. A woman, a child rather, as beautiful as yourself--as much *more* beautiful as love is lovelier than gold; an Eve in innocence, with a soul as crystal as a silver lake. She is as the breezes and the wild flowers; as loving as I've ever been; so ignorant that she does not know the worth of money, and so fond of inquiring about the settlements when I asked her to marry me. Think of that, Virginia!"

"Are you in earnest, Philip?"

"I am. I am sorry for your disappointment, my sweet cousin, and hope you have not thrown away any eligible claimants while waiting for me. I'm going to-morrow, as fast as you can carry me, to put an end to that suspense of which I spoke. My little bird is deep in the western forests, looking out for me with those blue eyes of hers, so wistfully, for I promised to be back long ago. Your father's affairs are in a tangled condition. I warn you, Virginia; and you'd better make a good match while you've still the reputation of being an heiress. I've been trying to get my uncle's matters into shape for him; but I'm quite disengaged with the result."

"Perhaps that's the reason you have forgotten me so easily, Philip."

"I should expect you, my disinterested and very charming cousin, to entertain such a suspicion; but my pretty cousin lives in a log cabin, and has neither jewels nor silk dresses. So you see, I am not mercenary. Her loveliness now is not the first grand ornament. She looks better with a willow wreath in her hair than any other lady I ever saw with a wreath of diamonds."

"You are in a very generous mood, this evening, Philip Moore. You might at least spare comparisons to the women you have refused."

"I couldn't inflict any wounds upon your heart, cousin, for that's nothing but concentrated carbon—it's yet beyond the fusible state; and it's nothing now but a great diamond—very valuable, no doubt, but altogether too icy cold in its sparkle for me."

"Go on, sir. My punishment is just, I know. I remember when you were the pleader—yet I was certainly more merciful than you. I tempered my refusal with tears of regret, which I spice you ~~s~~ with pungent little pretty scents."

"Don't pull those violets to pieces so, Virginia. I like those flowers; and that's the reason you were the prettiest girl. If you'd have followed your own taste, you'd have worn jacinths. But, seriously, I must go to-morrow. I have remained away from my business much longer than I should; but I could not desert my uncle in his sickness and dying. He's with us now, better. He was kind to me in my boyhood, he made me proud of what I am, and if he did not think me fitted to carry the honors of

his family to the next generation, I can still be grateful for what he did do."

" You do not give me credit for the change which has come over me—if you did, you could not leave me so coolly. I'm not so bound up in appearances as I was once. Ah, Philip! this old country-house will be intolerably lonely when you are gone."

He looked down into the beautiful face trembling with emotion; he had never seen her when she looked so fair as then, because he had never seen her when her feelings were really so deeply touched. The memory of the deep passion he had once felt for her swept back over him, tumultuous as the waves of a sea. Her cheek, wet with tears, and flushed with feeling, pressed against his arm. It was a dangerous hour for the peace of that quiet young maiden in the far West. Old dreams, old habits, old hopes, old associates, the glittering of the waves of the Hudson, familiar to him from infancy, the scent of the sea-breeze and the odors of theilles in the homestead garden, the beautiful face upon his arm which he had watched since it was a babe's rosy face in its cradle—all these things had power, and were working about him a rapid spell.

" What does that child-like, ignorant young thing know of love, Philip? If some rustic fellow with rosy cheeks, who could not write his own name, had been the first to ask her, she would have said 'Yes' just as prettily as she did to you. But I have been tried—I know others, myself and you. My judgment and my pride approve my affection. Then the West is no place for such a girl as you. You used to be ambitious—to plan out high hopes for your future. I adore ambition in a man. I would have him sit at my feet day and night, and make no effort to conquer me. I would have him great, that I might be great. I would sacrifice with and for him. You have the celestial light here, Philip, where it is a glory to shine. Why and you throw yourself away upon a rude and uncultivated humanity? Stay here a week or two longer, and think of the better world of life you have chosen."

The moon hung in the heavens, high and pure, drawing the silks of the ocean, whose sighs they could almost hear; and like the moon, fair and serene, the memory of Alice Wille hung in the heaven of Philip's heart, calming the earthly tide of passion which had been unstrung in his breast. He remembered that she had no regard of hers that she would sacrifice herself for him, and he could not think her love was a chance thing, which could have been given to a commoner man just as readily.

" I have tarried too long already, Virginia; I must go to-morrow."

He did not go on the morrow; for while they stood there on the lawn in the summer moonshine, a servant came hastily, with word that the master of the house was again stricken down, in his library, as he sat reading the evening paper.

He was carried to his room, and laid upon his bed in an unconscious state. Everybody seemed to feel, from the moment of his attack, that this time there was no hope of his recovery. The family physician had only left him and returned to the city a day or two previously. The evening boat would be at the landing just below in fifteen minutes; Philip ordered a trusty servant to proceed on board of her to New York, and bring back the medical attendant by the return boat in the morning. Meanwhile he did what little he could for the relief of the aches and pains, while Virginia, pale as her dress, the flowers in her hair withering beneath the tears which fell upon them, sat by the bedside, holding the paralyzed hand which made no response to her clasp. Hours passed in this manner; toward morning, while both sat watching for some sign of returning sensibility to the deathly features, the sufferer's eyes unclosed and he looked about him with a wandering air:

"Where is Alice? Alice! Alice! why don't you come? I've forgiven you, quite, and I want you to come home."

"He is thinking of my sister," whispered Virginia, looking with awe into the eyes which did not recognize her, and drawing her cousin nearer to her side.

"Don't tell me she is dead—Alice, the pride of my house—not dead?"

"Oh, it is terrible to see him in such a state. Philip, can't you do something to relieve him?"

"Virginia, poor child! I'm afraid he is beyond aid all. Be brave, my dear girl, I will help you to bear it."

Philip could not refuse, in that still hour, his sympathy and tenderness to the frightened, sorrowful woman who had already failed to cling to. Presently the wild look faded out of the dead eyes.

"Virginia, is that you? My poor child, I am dying. Nothing can save me now. I leave you alone, no father, no mother, sister or brother, or husband to care for you when I am gone. Philip, are you here? Will you be all these to Virginia? Don't hesitate, do not let pride control you in this hour. I know that I rejected you once, when you asked me to be my son; but I see my mistake now. You have been very kind and considerate to me since I sent for you. You are a man of probity and honor. I should die content, if I knew Virginia was your wife, if you had not a thousand dollars to call your own. Poor girl! she will have very little after all my vain seeking of wealth for her. Gold is nothing—happiness is all. Virginia, take warning by me. I am a witness of the hollowness of pride. I have been a sad and discontented man for years. The memory of my cruelty to my Alice has stood like a specter between me and joy. Choose love—marry for love. Philip is more than worthy of you; try to make him happy. My boy, you don't speak. Take her hand, here, and promise me that you will take good care of my last and only child."

He uttered all this in a low voice, rapidly, as if afraid his strength would not last him to say what he wished. Virginia turned to her cousin and seized his hand.

"Philip! Philip! can you refuse—can you desert me, too? Oh, father! I shall be alone in this world."

"Why do you not promise me, and let me die in peace?" exclaimed the old man, with some of that stern command in his voice which had become a part of him; "do you not love my child?"

"Not as I did once. At least—but that's no matter. Do not be angry with me, about Virginia. I will be to her a true and faithful brother. I promise to care for her and share with her as if she were my sister."

"But if I see her your wife, my boy, I should feel repaid for all I have done for you, since you were thrown upon my care as an orphan and friendless, as my child will soon be. Send for the priest, children, and make it sure."

Philip was silent; his cousin, too, was silent and trembling. "Do you even see I'm going?—do you want to let me die un-
satisfied?"—the querulous voice was weak and sinking.

"I promise to be a brother to Virginia—to care for her as if she were my own, indeed. Is not that enough?"

"She is dead," replied the dying man, who, having been unceasingly busy, and exacting all his life, could not change his nature at the hour of death.

"I am not certain what to do, tempted by the force of your arguments. Philip wavered; but the moment when his hands should have given his uncle any satisfaction had passed. The awful change was upon his face, the sweat upon his brow, the rattle in his throat.

"Oh, my father!" sobbed Virginia, sinking upon her knees and clasping her arms over the heart which had ceased to beat.

The day morning broke over her as she wept wildly beside the bed. Philip was obliged to draw her away from the room by force, while others came to attend upon the dead. To see her so given up to grief, so desolate, with no one but himself to whom she could turn, touched him with pity and tenderness.

"Weep, if you will, poor girl; it will be better than choking back all those tears. Weep in my arms, for I am your brother." He said very gently, as he seated her upon a sofa and drew her round to his shoulder, soothing her and quieting her exceeding sorrow. Then, worn, from fatigue and exertion, she crept wearily on his bosom.

"How lovely she is, with her grace and vanity all melted away by sorrow," he thought, as he laid her carefully upon the pillow, and went out to give directions to the disturbed household.

During the next week Philip made himself of use to all, over-seeing, quietly directing and controlling every thing, and when

the funeral was over, the outer excitement subsided, and nothing left but the emptiness and shadow of the house from which the dead had recently been borne, then he had to consult with the orphan girl what should be done for the future.

"Will you stay where you are for the summer, while I go back and attend to my affairs at the West? If you will, I can come back again in the autumn, and we can then decide upon some settled plan for the future."

"I can stay here, if you think best. But it seems to me as if I shall go wild with fear and loneliness in this great house with no one but the servants, after you are gone. I don't know what to do, Philip."

"Is there no friend of your own sex who would be comfort and company, whom you could invite to stay with you till I come back? You will not wish to go into town this summer. Besides, my dear girl, I must tell you that the township will not be long in your hands. When the estate is settled up, this property here, and a small annuity possibly, will be all that I can save for you. Will it not be best for you to break up, dismiss the expensive array of servants, rent your house, and go in some agreeable family?"

"Oh, Philip, I don't know. I can't think well I can't do it. I know nothing of business. I wish you to do every thing for me;" her helplessness appealed to him strongly.

She could only think of one way with which she could be happy and content; but he did not propose that way.

"I can only suggest this, then, for the present: stay where you are now until I go home and arrange matters there. I will go home for a few weeks. In the mean time the affairs of the estate will be closing up. When I return, I will see to them; and when all is settled, if you wish to go to the West with me, you shall go. If I have a home by that time, you shall share it."

"How share it, Philip?"

He did not reply. He was resolved to see Alice Wilde again, to satisfy himself her character was all he had dreamed it—her love what he hoped; if so, nothing should tempt him from the fulfillment of the sweet promise he had made himself and her—neither gratitude to the dead nor sympathy with the living.

CHAPTER X.

RECONCILIATION.

ALICE WILDE had been taught by her father to "read, write, and cipher," and was not ignorant of the rudiments of some of the sciences; for, curiously enough, considering surrounding circumstances, there was quite a little library of books at the man-

hole, and some old-fashioned school-books among the number. If, when she first went into the seminary at Center City, some of the young ladies were disposed to ridicule her extreme ignorance upon some matters, they would be surprised by superior knowledge upon others; and I finally were content to let her assert her own individuality, and be what she was—a puzzle; a charming puzzle, too, for her kindness and sweetness made her beauty so irresistible that they could look upon it without envy. Another thing which helped her along both with teachers and pupils was the excellency of her war robe and her lavish supply of pocket-money, for it is tolerably well known that the glitter of gold conceals a great many blemishes. Before the first term was over she was the praise, the wonder, and the pet of the school; flying rumors of her great beauty and her romantic "backgrounds" having even winged their way over the pickets which bounded the seminary grounds, and wandered into the city.

The evening that Philip Moore reached home, after his eastern journey, chanced to be the same as that upon which the seminary began its annual exhibition, previous to closing for the long August holiday. He would not have thought of attending any thing so tiresome; but, taking tea with his partner, whose pretty wife was going and urged him to accompany them, he was persuaded against his inclination.

"As you are already spoken of for mayor, Raymond, and as I am one of the city fathers, I suppose we must show a becoming interest in all the various 'institutions' which do honor to our rising town," laughed Philip, as he consented to attend with his friends.

"It will be very encouraging, especially to the young ladies, to see your wise and venerable countenance beaming upon them," remarked Raymond.

"But really, Mr. Moore, there's somebody there worth seeing. I'm not—somebody quite above the average of blue-ribbon and white-linen beauty. I've heard all kinds of romantic stories about her, but I haven't seen her yet," chattered the young wife. "She's the daughter of a fisherman, I believe, who's grown enormously rich selling salmon and white-fish, and who's very proud of her. Or else she's an Indian princess whose father dug up a chest of buried gold—or something out of the common way. I don't know just what."

Philip's heart gave a great bound. "Could it be?" he asked himself. "No—nearly—and yet"—he was now as anxious to be present at the stupid exhibition as he had hitherto been to eschew it.

They took seats early in the hall, and had leisure to look about them. Philip bowed to acquaintances here and there. After a time he began to feel unpleasantly conscious of some spell fastening upon him—some other influence than his own will magnetizing his thoughts and movements, until he was

compelled to look toward a remote part of the room, where, in the shadow of a pillar, he saw two burning eyes fixed upon him. The face was so much in the shade that he could not distinguish it for some time; but the eyes, glowing and steady as the eyes of a rattlesnake, seemed to pierce him through and through. He looked away, and tried to appear indifferent, yet his own eyes would keep wandering back to those singular, singular, terrible ones. At last he made out the face: it was that of the young man who had brought him down from Wilde's mill the last autumn. What was Ben Perkins doing in such a place as this? He began to feel certain who the mysterious pupil was.

"She has thought to please and surprise me," he mused, "yet I believe I would rather she would have kept herself just as unsophisticated as she was, until she learned the world under my tutelage."

Young ladies came on to the stage, there was music and teaching—but Philip was deaf, for she was not amid the girls so strong.

At last she came. His own timid wild-flower, his fawn of the forest, stole out into the presence of all those eyes. A murmur of admiration could be heard throughout the hall. She was young yet she was self-possessed. Philip gazed at her in a sort of daze. Her dress of the richest blue silk, the flowers on her breast and in her hair, the bow, the step, the little personal accomplishments, were all *a la mode*. His woodland sylph had been transformed into a modern young lady. He was almost disconcerted—and yet she was so supremely fair, such a queen—and the others, that she looked more lovely than ever. He wondered if every girl had been teaching her how beautiful she was. There was nothing of coquetry or vanity in her looks—but a pride, cold and stately, which was entirely new to her.

He turned to Ben Perkins, who had leaned forward into the light so that his face was plainly visible; and the suspicions he had often entertained that the youth loved Alice were confirmed by his expression at that moment.

"Poor boy! how can he help it?" thought the good and happy gentleman, regarding the young lad with a good-natured compassion. He now saw that Mr. Wilcox was seated by Ben's side, his heart and eyes also fixed upon the stage.

"I've seen that face before," whispered Mr. Raynor. "What was it? Ah, I remember it well, now. I can't quite tell you, but it is, Philip. She's the daughter of Captain Wilde, a good customer of ours, who hails from the opposite bank. She's a glorious, remarkable girl! By the way, Philip, do you like her? Because I've a message for you. Captain Wilde sent me to inform you that if you ever set foot on his premises again he should consider himself at liberty to shoot you."

"Flirt with her! Let me tell you, Raynor, I'm engaged to her, and intend to marry her just as soon as I can persuade her."

to set a day. I love her as deeply as I honor her. There's something gone wrong, somewhere, or her father would not have left such a wori—he's a stern, high-tempered man, but he does not threaten lightly. They could not have received my letters."

"I presume I made part of the mischief myself," confessed Raymond, "for almost the first thing I told them when they entered my store this spring was, that you had gone off to marry your ex-errant cousin. You needn't look so provoked, Phil; I told them in good faith. You used to love Virginia in the day when you could tell in me; and if you'd have kept up your confidence, as you should, I would have been posted, and could have given your friends all the information they were in search of. Don't you see 'twas your own fault?"

"I suppose it was," replied Philip, with a smile, but still feeling uneasy, and oh, how intensely anxious to get where he could whisper explanations to the heart which, he now saw, had suffered more in his absence than he could have dreamed. Her efforts his eyes were fixed only upon Alice. Soon she perceived him; as their eyes met, she grew pale for a moment, and then went on with her part more calmly than ever. To him, it seemed as if they both were acting a part; as if they had no business, in that hour, to be anywhere but by each other's side; he did not even know what share she had in the performances, except that once she sang, and her voice, full, sweet, melancholy, the expression of the love-song she was singing, seemed to be asking of him why he had been so cruel to her.

The two hours of the exercises dragged by. The people arose to go; Philip crowded forward toward the stage, but Alice had disappeared. He lingered, and presently, when she thought the hall was vacated, she came back to see if her father had waited to speak with her. He was there; other parties were scattered about, relatives of the pupils, who wished to speak with them or congratulate them. She did not see him, but hurried down the aisle to where her father and Ben were standing. She looked pale and fatigued—all the pride had gone out of her air as the color had gone out of her cheek.

"Alice! dear Alice;" exclaimed Philip, pressing to her side, just as she passed her father.

I saw her start toward him with haughty calmness.

"Mr. Wilde. Allow me to congratulate you. Was that your wife singing by your side during the exercises?"

"That was Mrs. Raymond, my father's wife. But what do you mean by that, Alice? I supposed you had consented to take that name, if ever any one. Mr. Wilde, I received your card through Mr. Raymond, but I knew you were once too sure a friend of mine, and are always too honorable a man to refuse me a chance of explanation."

"Say your say," was the rafsmen's curt reply.

"You need not speak one word, Philip. It is I who ought to

beg your forgiveness, that I have wronged you by doubting you. Love—oh, love should never doubt—never be deceived!" exclaimed Alice.

"It would have taken much to have disturbed my faith in you, Alice."

"Because I had every motive for loving you; while you—you had pride, prejudice, rank, fashion, every thing to ~~say~~ against in choosing me."

"Indeed!" cried Philip. "Yes, every thing to be said" and he cast such an expressive glance over the young lady, that she blushed with the delicious consciousness of her own charms. "Oh, ugly, awkward, and ignorant, how ~~un~~kind I shall be of my wife!"

"But, Philip!" her tearful eyes, with the smile ~~flashing~~ through them, made the rest of her excuses for her.

Holding her hand, which was all the caress the presence of strangers would permit, Philip turned to the rathskeller.

"I asked you for your daughter's hand, in the letter which I sent you on the return of the young men who had been in your home, last autumn, since your son's arrival of which prevented my asking you in person. I have not yet had your answer."

When he said "letter," Alice's eyes turned to Ben, who had been standing within hearing all this time; he had a ~~quizzing~~ look now with one of stubborn despair.

"You gave us no letters, Ben."

Philip also turned, and the angry blood rushed into his face.

"Did you not deliver the letters I sent by you, yesterday?"

"Ha! ha! ha! No, by thunder, I didn't! Did you think a man was such a fool as to help put the letter up and I ~~open~~ break? I didn't give the letters, but I took all the ones I could to hurt you, Philip Moore. You ought to be a ~~dead~~ man now, by good rights. The game's not up yet. Let me tell you that!" And scowling at the party, he strode away into the night.

"He ought to be arrested—he is a dangerous fellow," said Mr. Wilke, looking after him uneasily.

"I am sorry for him," said Philip, "but that can do him no good."

"Look out for him, Philip; you can't be too wary—he will kill you if he gets a chance. Oh, how much trouble that poor boy has given me. I can not be happy while I have it in my heart."

"I am, then, child, don't you go to calling me by ~~name~~. We'll take care of Ben. Don't you trouble your head about him."

"If you could guess what I have suffered this winter past," whispered Alice, pressing closer to her lover.

"My poor little forest-fawn," he murmured. "But we must stop talking here; cavedroppers are gathering about. I

suppose this ogre of a seminary will shut you up to-night; but where shall I see you to-morrow, and how early? I have yet to explain my absence to you and your father—and I'm eager, oh, so eager, to talk of the future as well as the past."

"Meet us at the Hotel Washington, at my room," replied Mr. Wilde, speaking for her. "We will be there at nine o'clock in the morning. And now good-night, pass. You did bravely to-day. I'm going to see Philip safe home, so ~~you needn't~~ ~~worry~~ ~~about~~ ~~me~~ ~~in~~ ~~case~~ ~~of~~ ~~accidents."~~

Alice kissed her father good-night. That she wanted to kiss his cheek was too, and that he wanted to have her, was evident in the blushing looks of both; but people were looking askance at them, and their reluctant hands were obliged to part.

That night the store of Raymond & Moore was discovered to be on fire; the flames were making rapid headway when the alarm spread, and persons were thundering at the door and windows in two minutes.

"Does any one sleep in the store?" shouted one.

"Yes! yes! young Moore himself—he has a room at the back."

"Why doesn't he come out then? He'll be burned alive. Burst in the doors. Let us see what has happened him."

"The fire seems to come from that part of the building. He will surely perish."

The crowd shouted, screamed, battered the doors in wild excitement—none ran round to the back, and a ladder was placed at the window of his room, which was in the second story. Up at once from that room, David Wilde, whose hotel was but a dozen feet, running with others who rushed out at the alarm, as is the custom in provincial towns, was the first to place his foot on the ladder; his strength was great, and he broke in easily with a stroke of his fist, leaped into the building, up-stair in a moment with the young man, whom he handed to a fireman climbing up the ladder after him.

"It's all smoke—it's all smoke—that's all. Dash to the back, and I'll be all right presently," he cried to those who pressed about him. "It's that Ben, I know—cross me, if I don't. Ben's always crazy," he muttered to himself.

Philip soon struck off the steps which had so nearly resulted in his terrible end, and was able to help others in his turn. The fire was got under when it reached the top of the stairs, the store's curtains suffered from some damage. The young man was much enraged by this, as all his clothes had been ruined; they had the promise of a large sum of money to pay him, but that was the worst.

It was agreed, upon examination, that the fire was the work of an incendiary; Philip felt, in his heart, what the guilty individual was, and shuddered at his narrow escape. It was decided by him and Mr. Wilde to get the authorities upon the premises; but the perpetrator had fled, and no clue could be

got to him in the city. Mr. Wilde at once suspected he had gone up the river, and feeling that they should have no peace until he was apprehended, and not knowing what his liege he might do at the mill, he took the sheriff with him and started for home leaving Alice, for the present, at the school, with whom is one of the principal to see her friend is when she comes, as it was now vacation. Before he left there was a long conversation between the three—Philip, Alice, and her father. Philip, however, in his absence, As he went on to speak of Mortimer Merton and his daughter, of his death, the troubled state of the family affairs, etc., the raftsmen betrayed a keener interest than his connection with those affairs would seem to warrant.

"Poor Virginia! she is all alone, and she is your cousin, Philip," said Alice.

"She tried hard to get back her old power over me, Alice. You must beware how you compassionate her too much. But when we are married, and have a home of our own, we will share it with her, if you consent. I've no doubt she can find somebody worthy of her, even in this savage West, as she thinks it. And, by the way, I think we ought to get a house of our own as soon as possible, in order to have a shelter to shelter you—don't you, Alice?"

"She's tongue-tied. Girls always lose their tempers when they need 'em the most."

"Now, father, I should think you might answer for me," said Alice, trying to raise her eyes, but blushing and crying, "I will get the better of her, and she took refuge in her father's lap.

"Well, puss, I suppose you want to go to school now or six years yet—tell him you've made your cock-a-hoop to keep in school till you're twenty-two."

"School! I'll be your teacher," said Philip.

"Choose for yourself, puss. I suppose the sooner you shake off yer old father, the better you'll like it."

"I shan't shake you off, father. Neither shall I leave you alone up there in the wool. That matter must be settled at the start. I shall never marry, father, to desert you, or be an ungrateful child."

"Suppose we arrange it in this way then. We will live with your father in the winter, and he shall be with us in the winter. I don't want a pleader partner. We'll have to spend my summers in."

"Oh, that will be delightful," exclaimed the young girl, and then she buried more tears in the corners of her eyes, for pleasure.

"Then don't keep me in suspense any longer. Let me tell you if you will get ready to go back to New York with me in the latter part of September. We will be gone but a few weeks, and can be settled in the new mansion I've given orders for, before the winter is here. Shall it be so?"

"Say 'yes,' cubbie, and done with it, as long as you don't intend to say 'no.' I see she wants to say 'yes,' Mr. Moore, and since it's got to be, the sooner the suspense is over, the better I'll like it!" and with a great sigh, the raf'sman kissed the forehead of his cub and put her hand in that of Philip. With that act he had given away to another the most critical of his possessions. But children never realize the pang which rends the parent heart, when they leave the parent nest and fly to new bowers. "All I shall be good for now, will be to keep you in spending money, I suppose. You're going to marry a fashionable young man, you know, cubbie, and he'll want you tricked out in the last style. How much can you spend before I get back?" and he pulled his leather money-bag out of his pocket.

"I haven't the least idea, father."

"Sure enough, you haven't. You'll have to keep count of the dollars, when you get her, Mr. Moore; for never having been indulged in the pastime of her sex, going a-shopping, she won't know whether she ought to spend ten dollars or a hundred. Like as not, she'll get a passion for the pretty amusement, to pay for having been kept back in her infancy. You'd better get some of your women friends to go along with you, puss. Here's then, for the beginning." Her poured a handful or more of gold into her lap.

"Now, Mr. Willie, you need not indulge her in any thing beyond your means, upon *my* account; for—although she may have to conform to more modern fashions, as she has already done, since moving among others who do—she will never look so lovely to me in any other dress, as in those quaint, old-fashioned ones she wore when I learned to love her. And Alice, whatever other pretty things you buy or make, I request you to be married in a costume made precisely like that you wore last summer—will you?"

The raf'sman heard, two or three times, on his way up the river, from boatmen whom he hailed, of Ben's having been seen only a short way ahead of him, and he, with the sheriff, had little doubt they should capture him immediately upon their arrival at Willie's bark. But upon reaching their destination they did not find him. The men had seen him hovering about the mill, and Pappy had given him his dinner only a few hours before. He came to the house, looking as sin-sick, "like a raffish old fellow," snatching what I give him and trotting off to the woods ag'in."

It was soon ascertained from the mill and the woods secured that no further trace of the fugitive could be discovered. They kept up the search for a week, when the sheriff was obliged to return. David Willie wished to believe, with the officer, that Ben had fled the country and gone off to distant parts; but he could not persuade himself to that effect. He still felt as if the unseen enemy was somewhere near. However, nothing further

could be done; so, cautioning the house-servants to keep a good watch over the premises, and the mill-hands to see that the property was not fired at night, or other mischief done, he returned for his daughter.

"Give Pallas this new dress to be made up for the occasion, and tell her to be swift in her preparations, for the day is near. It will be a month, Alice, before I see you again—and then two months—and then I hope for no more parties. I shall take Mr. and Mrs. Raymond to the wedding, with your parents, and said Philip, with other party-wards, which I do not know. I we can not relate, as he placed her on the small boat, well laden down with boxes and bales containing the necessary "dry goods and groceries" for the *fête*.

"We'll charter a steam-tug next time," growled the ruffian, looking about him on the various parcels.

CHAPTER XI.

A MEETING IN THE WOODS.

PALLAS was in "her elements." There's nothing a genuine cook likes so well as to be given *cart-blanche* for a wedding. If the Wildes had invited a hundred guests to step with them a fortnight, she would have hardly increased the measure of her preparations. No wonder the old soul was happy in the prospect of the really excellent match her darling was to make, as well as in the promise that she was to go with it and take the culinary department of the new household into her charge.

"We's goin' to lib' som' what' changes this aints to do us some good, Sattern. We can go to makin' cake more like 'spectable colored it quilty should. An' de house will be trim now, and I'm to keep de keys of all de doors up a' round yo' young missis will set at de head ob de table, with plenty of sober, as my missis have allers done. An' you'll have to take some pride about you, and get older but so spry. Now, I hear nor see any ting so curas as we ain't had in this family. Now, Sattern, don't you let me catch you comin' at eatin' a single egg, 'cause I want 'em all for cake. Massa Massa brought home twenty dozen, what a dand' fer a cook. I want ebry one dem pimlets jays. An' you feed 'em chickens so good and fat, an' dem wild turkeys in de pim. De best land in country for a cook, after all. I've been readin' up, and I find we can have wild turkey and partridges and sandhill and venison and chicken, and Massa's brought home every ting from de grocery-stores a pusson could ask. What's eat eaten now? Sattern, has you been in dat citron? Laws, I catch you in dat, you'll nebbir forget it! Stop eatin' dem raisins! I declare to

gracious, ef I trus' you to chop a few raisins for me, you eat half of 'em up. Clear out de kitchen—immejity! I'd rudder get long alone."

Poor Saturn had to "fly round" more than was agreeable to his temper, but Alice contrived to keep up his strength and his spirits were soon restored, and he tried to be excessively useful.

"Well, well, dis arpent de dis 'tall; he's gettin' old and stiff, up and down, and I s'pose I mus' humor him a little. Dis boy, dis son, is set on be good times on dis world. It's bad I he'll have to sleep eatin' and sleepin' when he comes to die. Dar didn't no child ne'er I drinkin' that, Saturn; no marryin' nor givin' in marriage."

"What for? Is eatin' wicked, I, Pallas?"

"Not on dis earth, where it is a necessary evil. But *dar*—dar's bad times. Well sing dar', Saturn," she continued, anxious to recall the religious ardor which she was fearful of losing by her picture of the purely spiritual pleasures of the next world. "Well set under de tree ob life, by side ob beautiful river, an I sing all de hymns and psalms;" and she struck up, in a voice of rich melody,

"Oh Canaan, my happy home,
Oh, how I long for thee!"

While her husband joined in the strain with equal fervor.

Alice loved to hear them singing at their work; not only because of their musical voices, but the enthusiasm, the joy and expectation swelling through them, awakened her own young soul to hope and prayer.

A longer face than hers, as she sat in the little parlor, sewing upon the well-thought garments, it would be difficult to find—a kind of intense repose from the rarer content and love within. She had no but-babies. When a young girl is about to marry the man she loves, with the full approval of her jilted parents, and the consent of parents and relatives, when her heart is full of hope, when she thinks in solitude at her own happy thoughts, as she sits quietly sewing upon her needle, and the thoughts which are to enchain her beauty in lace, she experiences the most blessed portion of her life.

The atmosphere of promise rested upon the house. All its doors and windows were pervaded by thinking and anticipation. And yet there was a shadow with his shadow, which at times would pass over the smiling face. It was the dream of Ben. The world had not repaid him having caught shapes of some one who they were quite sure was he, at different times, in different lonely places in the forest.

Saturn came in one day, with the whites of his eyes of frightened wonder, averring that a ghost had run after him in the woods. What could be the purpose of a person thus hovering about in darkness? Surely nothing good. Alice was not afraid, personally, much afraid. She did not think Ben would

harm her, but she felt that he was hanging about, that his eye watched every preparation, that he would know when Philip came, and she was afraid he would have another opportunity to attempt his life. The courage which would not quail on the battle-field will fail before a secret and unknown evil. Even the ruffian, brave and powerful as he was, felt that unceasiness which springs from such a source. Many a time he went out with his rifle on his shoulder, resolved that if he met with the wretched and desperate youth, he would deal with him severely. His search was always in vain. Alice gave up all her rambles, much as she longed to get again into the heart of the whispering pine-forest.

One afternoon, when her father was at the mill, and Pallas, as usual, busy in the kitchen, as she sat sewing and singing to herself in a low voice, the bright room suddenly grew dark, and looking up at the open window, she saw Ben standing there gazing at her. If she had not known of his vicinity, she would not have recognized him at the first glance; his face was haggard, his eyes bloodshot, his hair long and tangled, his clothing soiled and worn.

"Don't scream!" he begged, as he saw that she perceived him, in a voice so hollow that it checked the cry rising to her lips. "I ain't going to harm you. I won't harm a hair of your head—not to save the neck yer so anxious to see hanged from the gallows. I know where your father is, and I just crept up to have a look at you. You look happy and content, Alice Wilde. See me! How do you like your work?"

"It is *not* my work, Ben, and you know it. Do not blame me. I pity you; I pray for you. But do go away from here—do go! I would rather you would harm me than to harm those I love. Oh, if you really care for me, go away from this spot—leave me to my happiness, and try and be happy yourself. Be a man. Go, Ben—let us alone. If you do *not* go, you will certainly be taken by others, and perhaps punished!"

"Catch a weasel asleep, but you can't catch me. You may put twenty men on the watch. How pleasant it must be for you to sit here making your wekin'-clothes; I think of it nights, as I lay on the hemlock boughs, with my eyes wide open, staring up at the stars. What's that song I used to have it had you sing so well, Alice?"

"They made her a grave too cold and damp
For a soul so warm and true;
And she's gone to the lake of the Devil's Swamp,
Where, all night long, by the firefly lamp,
She paddles her light canoe."

The maiden shuddered to her heart's core as his voice rose wild and mournful in the sweet tune to which the ballad was set. "Ha! ha! Alice, it's the same little canoe that you used to come up to the mill in so often, in those pleasant old times!"

" And her fire-fly lamp I soon shall see,
Her paddle I soon shall hear;
Long and loving our life shall be,
And I'll hide the maid in a cypress-tree,
Wheen the footstep of death is near."

Alice seemed to be listening to her own dirge;

" Away to the Dismal Swamp he speeds—
His path was rugged and sore:
Through a tangled juniper, beds of reeds,
Through many a tea, where the serpent feeds,
And man never trod before!"

And with an unearthly shriek he bounded away through the garden and into the woods, leaving Alice so overcome, that Pallas, who had been attracted to the door by the strange voice, brought her the "camfire" bottle to restore her.

" He's a ravin' maniac, that poor boy is, my chile. He ought to be catch'd and put in de 'sylum at once! fore harm's done. M'ry, chile, I was jus' goin' to take down de rifle to 'fend my b'lk to my. I was 'fraid he'd tear you all to pieces, like a ragin' wild beas'!"

" You wouldn't have had courage to fire, would you? I'm sure I should ha'nt."

" In course I should have had courage. Spose I'd stan' by and see my chile tote off into the woods by a madman? Tush! G'wan lea' I'll fight for her chickens. If I hadn't a rifle, I'd spring on 'im, too, and nail 'f he laid a han' on my chile;" and the old negro woman breath'd hard, holding herself erect, and looking so determined, that she inspired courage in the one who regarded her.

" Then I shall choose you for my body guard," said Alice, " for I begin to feel like a little chick in a big field, with an unseen hawk in the air which might pounce on it at any time. Oh, Pallas, didn't he look fearful?"

" Awful, miss, s, awful! We can't be too kerful of a fanatick — and poor Ben's got to be one, sure 'nuff! Poor Ben! a year ago he was as many a young person as dese yere ole eyes can' see to see; and so willin' and kind, alfers lookin' out to do a little service, bringin' us game and berries, and makin' us furnitur' and fixin's about de house — ready to work all day, jes' to hab you say, 'Thank you Ben,' or gib him one smile. I jes' wish de weddin' was over. I has a sense as I think is goin' to happen. And you know, chile, when ole Pallas lets a sense, it alfers comes to suthin'."

" Don't mention it, if you have, Pallas, for I'm nervous enough already. There comes father now. I feel safe when he is near."

Upon hearing her account of Ben's looks and words, the rascals resolved more firmly than ever to take him into custody if possible. Leaving Pallas, who was a better man than her husband, with a double-barreled gun, to defend the house,

necessary, in their absence, he summoned his full force and hunted the woods for twenty-four hours without success. He then stationed two men in the outskirts, in view of the house, to be relieved every eight hours by two others, and to keep up the watch, on double wages, day and night, till the enemy was taken or the wedding over.

On the third day of his watch, one of the men, while standing by the garden fence, eating his lunch, his rifle leaning against the rails beside him, was suddenly knocked down, and by the time he got upon his feet again, he saw Ben Perkins vanishing into the forest with the weapon on his shoulder. The news of this misfortune was any thing but encouraging, for the chances of his doing mischief were increased tenfold by the fact of his having possession of a loaded gun. Yet Alice's courage served, praying silently to Heaven that all might be well, and, laying in the faith and hope of youth, went on with her preparations; and Pallas finished shelves full of frosted cake and other delicacies; and Saturn hewed wood and brought water, receiving his reward as he went, from his wife's benevolent hand; and Mr. Wilke was alert and vigilant, ready for all emergencies.

It was now near the middle of September; the blackberries were gone, and the grapes were yet green and unripe. Aunt Pallas was in want of wild-plums to pickle, and of wild-herbs to flavor some of the dressings for dishes yet to be cooked. She set forth into the woods, having no occasion for personal fears, and not finding what she desired, wandered farther into their depths than she had intended. Suddenly she started with a "Hi! hi! what's this?"

"If you've any thing in that basket a starvin' man can eat, give it to me." It was Ben Perkins who spoke, from behind a fallen tree, where he was crouching, hiding his unshaded face to her view.

"I hab noth'n' at all; and if I had, why should I gib it to you, when you's makin' us all de trouble you can?"

"You've turned against me too, Aunt Pallas," he said, in so hopeless a tone, that she paused from her purpose of going away as fast as she could. "I've done you nuffin' all day, as goes by; I've never refused to lend you a hand, and I've never done nothin' to injure you; but you, too, will lay traps for me on the sly. Go and tell 'em what I say, if you can't. I don't know as I've strength to get us away to-night. It's a week since any thing has passed my lips but honest birds' eggs I cleaned up yesterday. Do you want me to lay traps for them?"

"You come home with me, and I hab to you all I want, and hab all de bread you want. Nobody's starvin' but you."

"Hal hal! you're a cate 'un, and you too? I don't think I shall put my foot into that trap."

"Well, den you gib me dat gun what you've got that. Go,

me dat gun and I'll bring you sathin' to eat, and won't tell where you are."

"No—not you can't come that game."

"You don't suppose I'd bring you my flag to eat or help keep you alive, when you're tryin' yer best to kill my son? I don't go you? It's you is to kill, Ben. What for you be so bad so quick for, Ben? You us I to be a nice boy. I saw you a berry time a year ago. I can't bear to see you hurtin' yes. I's so—let me tell you. Come now, yer gib me back dat gun, an' we be friends. I's kill of a w'ol' beast, and I'll do all I can for you, sartin sure, Ben."

"Pallas, I tell you I'm starving. I want somethin' to eat. Let me eat you alone. I swear to you, I won't use it on any of your family. I won't hurt a hair of Alice's head—not her father's. But I want that rifle—it's none of your business why. Won't you give me somethin' to eat, for the sake of old times, Pallas?"

That same ravenous, hungry, beeching look—how could she refuse it?

"You've acted like a crazy man, Ben, and you've done berry wrong to yourself as well as others. I can't help you, less you want to do better. Gib me dat gun, and take yer Bible with you. I want to hear him that's to be Miss Alice's husband an' I'll help you all I can."

"What should I promise not to harm him? He's all he can be to me? He's all I ought to kill him if I can? What'd it be right and justifiable for me to take his life? He's done it—yes he's taken a life, but in a different way. I was a poor, poor, half-wrinkled young man, with nothing but my pride to rely on. I hadn't no education, I hadn't no money, but I had the captain's daughter—I worshiped her shadow. She'd have been mine—I know she would—but he hadn't come along and got her away from me. He, who had every thing, came and took me of the only thing I cared to have. He used his power, at hand his money and his fine ways to steal my girl away. As soon as he caught her in round I was nothin'—Miss Alice walked right over me to get in his arms. I tell ye, the man has power, and we are fine and natural red men, as it were. I ought to be revenged."

"You is a man, Ben Perkins; and I'll tell ye a thing, I'll be the last to take sum for it. I ain't never been a man to be afraid to talk up with ye, if I only had to stand up to you. I's a sly, bold, bold, bold; but I'm not a fool. I's been here all day, and I seen a lot of you. You like a young man, we all do, and I seen you all fit to make you. You a fine looking sot to shoot down. Its you is all go wrong. Den when a young man that is sensible to her consider, and can't no more help comin' int' you, he's a sweet face and you can, when he loves her, and wants to marry her, and she loves him, as she naturally

would, you get wicked and ugly, and want to kill him. You man! you don't love her! If you did, you could never break her heart, killing her husband as is to be. What would you gain by it? 'Sall of likin' and pityin' you, said she, to hear yoar name, and stand with a say and do, 'cause you'd be her murderer, wed as his. For sall of them and more? Why, if you *re*-ally loved her, you'd try to make her happy, and when you couldn't hab her, you'd be glad she'd done she like her. You is a bad fellow, Ben Peacock, and you just know how lucky it is Miss Alice didn't take up with you.

"For poor, miserable old people. Didn't you do all wrong? Taint to be bad, but you done it. You're a bad woman, wicked to the bone. You're a bad woman. Who'd doesn't know of your ways? I tell you, you're a bad woman. Taint for us to hab all we want in our poor world. Taint for us to hab all we want in our poor world."

us to revenge our enemies. Chris' says, Do good to dem dat de-spicably use yer. And nobo'ys lies used yer bad. He says, Love yer enemies. Oh, Ben! Ben! ef, insid of bein' de wicked bim you has you had prayed to de Lord Jesus to save yer from temptation, and same yer could'nt keep in dis house, to meet yer good, yer wofull. It be hard to have a good son. People has bad and dasse for yer. Don't think yer to be up one, poor boy. Das' s'plain to me for Chris' to wife away on dis year's day.

"I don't know nothing' about it. I've never been bad. That's natural for a man to love his enemies. I can't do it. But if I thought you'd pity me and pray for me - if I thought Miss Alice would pray for me, I'd give up wicked thoughts and try to govern myself."

"Sue do's pray for yer, Ben, wid all her heart, every time she prays. I've seen her cry about yer many times. Sue'd gib her right hand, mas', to help you good and happy. Masser's sorry for yer, too; he loves you so much et yer, once; but course he can't let you kill his friends. Come, now, Ben, you promise to do right, and I'll stand by yer till that thick and thin."

"Some of the time I'm good, and some I'm bad. I didn't use to be so. It's only wickedness has made me so ugly. I don't know how to try to be better."

"May I pray for you, Ben?"

"Yes - if you want to be such a fool," he said, reflectively.

The good old color I wear, a woman would have on her knees, here upon the mossy cushion of the chair, powdered out her soul in prayer for the life and limb of the son, who's a wretched outcast, left hanging to her appeal in his behalf. Tears is running down her cheeks, the earnestness, the pathos, of her soul is petitioned to the great Father who she said I to be a wretched poor creature, and take care of him, and adopt him as a son, to comfort his lonely, such, misanthropic nature. His sobs accompanied her "Amen."

"I s'pose it's such a baby as to cry," he said, when she had finished, "but I was its work; but when a fellow starts a work like this out of the house, I thank you, God, for your master, And Pallas, I'll be a good man if you'll let me. Here, I'll give you a Pallas if I can get him, and I'll work to pay for the use of him. That's it, and you can have it, and I'll be a good man, as you please. I just took this poor friend of mine, and I'll be a good man, and I'll be a good man, and I'll be a good man. If you want to have a gun, I'll get it for you, and I'll be a good man."

"Never will I," said Pallas; "I'll be a good man, and I'll be a good man with bread and meat. You'd better make up your mind, by next time, to go home wid me, and you's all up to me, and let him do as he feels is best wid yer. He's a bad man, I'm sure."

She took the gun and fastened off with it, and to get that means of harm away from him. She was firmly resolved not

to break her promise to him, as far as she desired that he might be put in safe quarters, and this must and would be done away with. As he had confided himself so completely in his moods, she did not rely much upon his present state. Reaching home, she stowed the rifle away again, putting about it, and filling her basket with some dried fruit, and started off to the appointed spot. To her surprise, he was not there. She waited a few minutes, but he did not come.

"I can't bear to know a human being is starvin' to death," she muttered, setting the basket in a hollow of the fallen tree. "I'll leave this here—and now I've kept my promise, I'll go straight home and tell mother all bout it, and he can take such steps as he thinks best."

She gave a graphic account of the whole interview to the ratsmice as soon as he came in to tea. When she came to that part of his confession where he spoke of his intent to choke Philip, while on the river, Alice turned pale, saying, with a shudder, as she recalled the scene of the interview, "I can't tell her dreams during that terrible period of the journey of her lover with his deadly enemy:

"Yes! yes! I did—but it was in a dream. I heard the ship gliding along in the stillness. Philip—was—on his arm under his head, and his carpet bag by a foot or two. Brown was sleeping over him, his face white as death. His hands—his hands were—his hands creeping toward Philip's throat. I sprang upon him—I held his hands—I drew him back—I—screamed—and the scream awoke me, and father rushed into the room to see what was the matter. You noticed my frightened face, I suppose?"

"Poor boy," said the ratsmice, with a shudder from his shock, when his servant had closed the door. "I might have been sorry for the boy. And when you are married and out of the way, poor boy, it takes him in bad, and try and get him out. He'll make a man yet."

"He isn't off home for his father, so it's best to let him go and bring him up. I told him so. Now, father, you know as well as he'd only let me, and Miss Alice is a good girl, I tell you."

Mr. Wilde went to the gate and bade his father farewell. The basket of food had been taken away, but he was in the vicinity.

CHAPTER XII.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

It was the day before the wedding. The house was in order to the full satisfaction of the maid-servants. Vases, worthy of the occasion, lined the shelves in the grand wing. Philip, with his suite, including the minister who was to conduct, was

expected to arrive by supper-time. The last touches were given to the arrangements, and Alice was dressed to receive her guests by the middle of the afternoon. The motherly heart of her old nurse was so absorbed in her, that she came very near taking fatal mistakes in her dressings and sevices. Every five minutes she would leave her work to speak with the restless young creature who, beautiful with hopes and fears, flittered from room to room, trying to occupy herself, so that her heart would not beat quite so unreasonably.

"They are coming!" she cried, at last, having stolen out for the hundredth time to the top of a little knoll which gave her a fuller view of the river. How gladly the ripples sparkled, how lightly the winds danced, to her joyous eyes. "O, Puss, they are coming! What shall I do?" And she sat there in the old woman's bosom, as if flying from what she yet so eagerly expected.

"Do, darlin'? Oh, my chile, you got to be a woman, now; no more little chile, to run away an' leave. Masser Morgan, he's no more little chile, to run away an' leave. Masser Morgan, he's proud of his wife dat is to be. Don't make him 'ashamed, darlin'."

Ashamed of her! Mortally Pissed! Then it was death to Alice's sensitive spirit. She left her head and her heart calm at once.

"There, nurse, I don't feel so sickly any more. I think I can meet them, clergymen and all, without flinching."

Her father, who had been on the look-out, took a hasty swim, and went down to meet the party. Alice stood on the shore, as she had done upon the day of Philip's first arrival. A sadness glowed in either cheek, which was all the outward sign of the inward tumult as she saw her father come sailing toward her. In the boat, Philip, the fore-o'-izened, gazed her. She saw, in the boat, Philip, the master, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond, with a young lady whom she had never met, and a small boy of about the age of the young

It was the pride of the old man to show when the young
lady turned and went to his room. "Look here," he said, "I did not

"I don't want you to mind me, cousin. I am more
interested in poetry and painting."

know such things as these, and the reason of the
Pope's sending him down, and of the many different
ways he will take to get his end.

Read the following text and answer the questions that follow. The text is about the life of a person named John. John was born in a small town in the United States. He grew up in a family of four. His father was a teacher and his mother was a nurse. John's brother and sister were both students. John liked to play football and basketball. He also enjoyed reading books and playing chess. John's family moved to a bigger city when he was 12 years old. There, he found a new school and made new friends. He continued to play sports and read books. John graduated from high school at the age of 18. He then went to college and studied engineering. After college, he got a job as an engineer. John married his wife, Mary, in 2005. They have two children, a son and a daughter. John enjoys spending time with his family and hobbies like playing golf and traveling.

"I am sending you a copy of the present *Virginia* to my cousin Virginia." — *Virginia*, 1856.

"This is my cousin Virginia.
I have come to wish you joy, Alice," said Virginia, kissing
her on the cheek. "I have come to tell you that we are to be
married on the 15th of June."

her children, and I saw a number of her men. Her son, the son of her brother, who remained

but, to add the all important touch of the horses, who
herk, with interest, to the quack-quack! Who

be dat comin' up de walk wid masse, an' de company? Ef dat ain't little Virginia Moore growed up, who is it?"

"It's Virginny, sure 'nuff," cried her husband.

In the mean time, that young lady herself began to look about with quick, inquiring glances. She peered into the room, on a face anxiously, and again toward the old servants, a perplexed look coming over her face as she recrossed the house.

"You needn't say a word, Miss Virginny—it's us, certain—Pallas and Saturn, your father's people, who had you in our arms every day till you was eight year old. You do remember old Pallas, don't you now, honey? My, how! what a han'some, tall girl you is growed—de prettiest girl I ever see. You a Moore true and tra, miss is. My own eyes is glad to see you."

"Hi! hi! Miss Virginny?" cried Saturn, bowing and scraping.

"Come 'long, an' let me get yer hand off. I want to take a good look at ye, honey. Miss Alice's father was a Moore—she was like her in looks, small, and pretty, and thin like; but ye's a perfect Moore, Miss Virginny. My, and I know 'em all, root and branch. I tell you we been Misses Pallas' people to our Mooreses, but Miss Alice's father, he ain't. She had the visitor's bonnet off by this time, and had all the time, fell oblivious, in her excited state, of what was passing.

"Yes, Miss Virginny," said the old woman, letting her powdered figure up to its full height, "I am that you, and you have been taught to detect and to know us. You would hardly have come to the welling if you had known what poor company you were to get in."

All those of the company who knew her looked on with surprise, for he had done all this in a moment of speech, and took on the air of a sly old man. Virginny, however, had a moment's delay, taking as it were a deep breath, and then said low out of doors, "I am sorry, but I have got into such a noble though weather-beaten house."

"I do not see any nobility about this house, with a scullion giving him her hand, and, moreover, a scullion, too. "I was but a little child, you know, when I first come to this country, I can't calculate. Do, as I have done, as I have done, and I have heard. It my father who sold you, David Moore, to us. I ask you to forgive it. I am poor, and I have no right to talk."

Her lips trembled evidently with emotion.

"Dear Virginny! is it you, Alice? is it you, my girl?"

"An' aint? You Pallas, and you are still the pretty young thir Cousin. It's me, Alice, I am."

"Well talk it over, as we used to do, in old Pallas' house, our guests are here now. The time has come to make the acquaintance."

Pallas was still in full cry. For a moment she had the means of saving her, and, instead of leaving, she turned, with her subordinate husband, to close up the front

"I spect I'll spile half dese tings. I's so fusterated. Did you
wind what I put that pepper, Suckum? I declar' I can't say
w'ether I put it in de gravy or in de coffee. I just turn round
and put it in de souf' on de stove, w'en I was thinkin' 'bout
curious tings happens. Dear! dear! I put it in de coffee, so
half, and now dat's all to be throwed away! 'Sweet tings won't
be fit to eat. Why don' you fly round and git more coffee?
You is de stupidest nigger!"

In spite of small vibrations, however, the supper was served in the season and with due seasoning. Gay conversation prevailed; but Alice, though bright and attractive, felt uneasy. Her gaze frequently wandered to the windows and open doors. A certain dark figure had so often started up in unexpected places, and seemed to hover about so when least expected, that she could not be entirely at her ease. It was true that seven men were on guard, and that Ben had not been heard of for a week; but he was so sly, so subtle, she felt almost as if he might drop out of the roof or come up out of the earth at any instant.

at any instant.

Long after the rest of the party, fatigued with their journey, had retired for the night, David Wible, Alan Philip, and Virginia sat up talking over the past, present, and future.

Alice, who had never known the particulars of her mother's marriage and death, except as she had gathered hints from her old nurse, now listened with tearful eyes to brief explanations of the past.

life. If he had first finished his studies and put himself in the way of gaining even a modest living, and she had chosen to share such a lot, he would have done right in following the dictates of his heart. Now he felt that he had been really rash. A year of strange, wild happiness, mixed with sorrow and privation, passed, and the wife became a mother. Philip nursed her with tireless assiduity; her husband clung to her sick couch, could not exert himself as he might have done alone; they grew desperately poor—he could not seek her solace without humbling his pride, and writing to her father to send her, not him, the means necessary to her comfort and recovery. They were coldly denied. Philip's resources, however, became still more, and trouble more, retarded her recovery—she fell into a delirium, and died in his arms, who swore a great oath that her beloved corpse should forsake a world so unjust, so cruel, so unhappy. Sending a bitter message to her father, he accompanied with their infant child, The old colored handmaiden, who had always tended her husband to accompany them, went with him as foster-mother to the child. They travelled to the far West—no farther in those days than now—and when they last saw him where they now were, they were isolated in the wilderness.

Mr. Wilde took up his position at a very remote hotel. By the time other emigrants had made settlements down the river, he had made enough from it to purchase a claim. He toiled harder with his own hands, and did not know when it was wanted. As years passed, he employed the old handmaiden, as towns grew up within market-distance, finding a master rising up on him. During all this time he had not been able to adjust the civilized world; nature's strength and weakness were ill, are subject to prejudice—and because the handmaiden, unaccustomed had allowed a fair child to perish, he had been exposed to refined society *et cetera*. He kept to the country and manners, to great degree, of those by whom he was surrounded.

All these things explained to Philip many anomalies in the talk and habits of Mr. Wilde—the possession of books, the knowledge of men—which had hitherto disturbed his curiosity.

It had been the object of the rich man to bring up his daughter in strict seclusion from the world, he expected that but the thought of further consequences than to keep her from the world, selfish, unscrupulous, and the strongest. Of course they slipped in their way. His frankness, however, however, and beauty exceeded his fashionable graces, in Mr. Wilde's estimation; more intimate association with him and his wife was to be expected. The jealous he had been keeping up with the world, and when it came to the certainty that his wife had a secret love between one of the rough and ready, and her, and a man like Philip, he could not understand himself that Philip was his choice.

"And what do you think brought us out here at this critical

moment?" asked Virginia. "I come to throw myself upon Philip's charity--to become a pensioner upon his bounty. Yes, Mr. Willey, upon closing up my father's estate, there was absolutely nothing left for his only child. He lived but to all that he possessed, hoping, before his poverty became known, that I would make a brilliant match. A fortnight ago my lawyer told me there would be nothing left but a small annuity from my master, which they can not touch. It is a sum barely sufficient to cover my paupership--it will not begin to pay my board. So I, unable to bear my discomfiture alone, friendless, sorrowful, thought it less bitter to begin anew among strangers than in the scenes of my former triumph. I came on to beg Philip to find me some little rural school where I might earn my bread and butter in peace, unsparing by the coldness of past worshippers. I'll make a good teacher--don't you think so?--so commanding?"

Yet she sighed heavily, despite her attempt at pluckiness. It was easy to be seen that earning her own living would go hard with the accomplished daughter of Mortimer Moore.

"But Philip will never let you go away from us, I am sure," said Alice's soft voice, caressingly.

"I told she goes to a home of her own," added her cousin, with a mischievous smile. "I wouldn't be guilty of match-making; but I own I had a purpose in asking my friend Irving to stand as godfather with Virginia. How do you like him, my sweet cousin?--be honest now."

"Not as well as I have liked some other men, sir?"

"Oh, of course, not yet; but you'll grow to it; and he has no stain upon his escutcheon--he isn't even a flour-merchant or mill-owner."

"You haven't told me what he is yet," said Virginia, with a slight show of interest.

"He's my book-keeper."

"Oh, Philip! you're jesting."

"No, indeed, I'm not. He has not a cent, saving his salary; but he's a gentleman and a scholar, and has seen better days."

"Well, I like him, anyhow," she responded, pluckily.

"You want to offer him a home to pay his addresses to you. You could teach school, and he could keep books. You could take a set of three rooms, and wait upon yourselves. I'd propose to stand in the rooms with chimney, door, and rug carpeting."

"You are a rotter, Paup."

"And to stand you an occasional barrel of flour and load of red-ashlar wood."

"My projects brigaded."

"D'ye see the end," said the rafshun, "she'll do better'n you think her yet. Since my own chick has deserted me for another hen, I don't know but I had a fit Virginia myself."

"I wish you would," and the great buck eyes were turned to him with a mournful, lonely look. "I suppose she is so

happy and blessed, they do not need me. But I should love to wait upon you, and cheer you, sir."

It was a great change which misfortune was working in the spirit of the proud and ambitious girl. Philip, who knew her so well, regarded her present mood with surprise.

"Well, well, without joking, I intend to a boy this orphan girl. She's the sister of my own dead wife, and she shall share equally with my little Alice in all that the rough old rafshman has."

"Which won't be much, father," said Alice, with a smile, glancing around upon their humble forest home.

"Don't be too sure of that, little one. I haven't felled pine logs and sawed lumber for fifteen years to no account. Did you think your two dresses a year, your slippers, and straw-hats had even up all the money-bags I brought home with me upon my trips? Here's a check for five thousand dollars, pass, to furnish that new house with; and when Philip gets time to tend to it, the cash is ready to put up a steam saw-mill back about here, somewhere—the income to be yours. It'll bring you in a nice little bit of pocket-money. And if Virginia condescends to accept that pale-faced book-keeper, that's an equal sum laid aside for her—and home and money as much as she wants in the mean time. It shan't be said the old rafshman's pretty daughters had no wedding portion."

Virginia took his rough hand in her two white ones, and a tear mingled with the kiss which she pressed upon it.

CHAPTER XII

THE TORNADO.

WHEN Alice came out of her room dressed for the marriage ceremony she looked quaintly lovely. Old Philip's eyes as he looked at her, and her father wife, in the dimness of the hall, gazed from his eyes; for it was as if the fair young bride of long ago had come to life.

Philip had made it an especial request that she should dress in a costume similar to that she wore when he first loved her; and her father had told her to provide no wedding-gift, as he wished her to wear one of his own choosing. She had been attired in the bridal robe and veil, the long white dress, the long white gloves which had lain so many years in the interior's trunk. Philip's gift, a band of white lace, such as above a brow not less pale—set in the golden masses of her hair.

Virginia laid aside her mourning for that day, and, dressing in a fleecy muslin robe, as bride-maid, and like the lass, barely on account of the simplicity of her dress. Her face had gained a

expression of gentleness which added very much to her superb attractions, and which was not unnoticed by her companion in the ceremonies.

The words had been said which made the betrothed pair man and wife. A more romantic wedding seldom has occurred than was this, in which wealth and elegance were so intimately combined with the rude simplicity of frontier life. To see those beautiful and richly-dressed ladies flitting in and out the modest house buried in the shadows of the western woods; the luxurious viands of the cook's producing served upon the plainest of felt, to have the delicate and the rough so contrasted, made a pretty and effective picture against the sunshine of that September day. The spirit of the scene was felt and enjoyed by all, even the venerable clergyman—rich voices and gay laughter blent with the murmur of the river—fond, admiring eyes followed every motion of the bride. The bride! Where was the bride?

She had been standing on the lawn, just in front of the door, with Mrs. Raymond, who was saying:

“Happy is the bride the sun shines on,”

just the previous moment. Mrs. Raymond had run down to the river-bank, and was throwing pebbles in the water.

Mr. Wilde, ever apprehensive, ever vigilant, had just missed her, and was turning to inquire of the bridegroom, when a shriek, wild, sharp, agonizing, paralyzed for an instant every faculty of the listeners.

“Great God, it is that madman!” burst from the father’s lips.

Philip and he sprung out-of-doors together, just in time to see her borne into the forest, flung like an infant over the shoulder of her abductor, who was making great leaps along the path, with the speed and strength of a panther. The two men appointed as guards were running after him. Mr. Wilde sprung for his rifle—the bridegroom waited for nothing.

“Don’t shoot!” he shouted to the men; “you will kill the girl!”

Philip reached and distanced the men; the rattrapman, strong and tall, well accustomed to the woods, passed him, even madly as he exerted himself.

“If I only dared to fire,” he breathed, between his clenched teeth. “If he would give me just one second’s fair and square aim—but my child, she is his shield!”

Two or three times the two foremost pursuers came in sight, almost within arm’s reach of the terrified girl, crying, “Philip! father!” in such piercing tones of entreaty.

“Can not you save me, Philip?” Once he was so near, he heard the question distinctly—but the furious creature who crept her gave a tremendous whoop and bound, leaping over logs and fallen trees, brooks, and every obstacle with such speed, that his own feet seemed to be loaded with lead, and he to be oppressed with that powerlessness which binds us during

terrible dreams. He flew, and yet, to his agony of impatience, he seemed to be standing still.

"Philip—father—Philip!"

How faint, how far away. At length they heard her no more; they had lost the clue—they knew not which way to pursue. The forest grew wilder and denser; it was dim at midday under those tall, thick-standing pines; and now the afternoon was wearing toward sunset.

"Philip," said the raftsmen in a hoarse voice, "we must separate—each man of the party must take a different track. Here is my rifle; I will get another from the men. Use it if you dare—use it, *at all risks*, if that devil seeks to harm her. His strength must give up some time."

"Don't despair, father," said the new-made husband, but his own heart was cold in his bosom, and he felt so desperate that he could have turned the rifle upon himself.

Not knowing but that he was going further from instead of nearer to the objects of his search, with every step, he had to pause frequently to listen for some sound to guide him. Wandering on in this wild, unsatisfactory way, his brain growing on fire with horror, suddenly he heard a sharp voice, chanting:

"I'll hide the maid in a cypress-tree,
When the footstep of death is near."

The next moment he came face to face with Ben Perkins—but no Alice was in his arms now, nor was she anywhere in sight.

"Fiend! devil! what have you done with my wife?"

His eyes shone like coals cut of a face as white as ashes, as he confronted his enemy with a look that would have made any sane man tremble; but the wretch before him only stared him vacantly in the face with a mournful smile, continuing to sing:

"And her fire-fly lamp I soon shall see,
Her paddle I soon shall hear."

"Where is she—answer me, devil?"

The hand of Philip clutched the lunatic's throat, and with the strength of an anguish as superhuman as the transient power of the other had been, he shook him fiercely as he repeated the question. The madman wilted under his grasp, but as soon as the hold was relaxed, he slid from under it, and sprang away.

"They make her a grave too cold and damp!"

he chanted, darting from tree to tree, as Philip, hopeless of making him tell what he had done with Alice, tried to shoot him down.

"He has murdered her," he thought; and getting a momentary chance, he fired, but without effect; Ben could clamber, springing from branch to branch like a squirrel, until he reached the top, and like a squirrel, chattering nonsense to himself. "If I had another shot I would put an end to his miserable existence."

muttered Philip, turning away to trace, it possible, the track of the man, and find where he had dropped Alice.

Soon he came out upon a small, open, elevated space—the river was upon one side, the woods all around. Something strange was in the air—nature seemed to be listening—not a breath rippled the water or made a leaf quiver—he felt hot and suffocated. Despite of all his mental misery, he, too, perked and listened like the elements—his ear caught a far-away murmur. The day had been very warm for that season of the year; it grew, now, oppressive. A low bank of dark clouds lay along the south and west, hanging over the prairie on the opposite side of the stream—it was such a bank of clouds as would seem to threaten rain before midnight; but even while he gazed, a great black column wheeled up from the mass and whirled along the sky with frightful rapidity. The distant murmur grew to a roar, and the roar deepened and increased until it was like the surf-swell of a thousand oceans. Stunned by the tumult, fascinated by the sublime terror of the spectacle, he followed with his gaze the course of the destructive traveler, which flew forward, sweeping down upon the country closer and more close. The air was black—light fell upon every thing—he saw the tornado—holding in its bosom dust, stones, branches of trees, tufts of bushes, a dark, whirling mass of objects, which it had caught up as it ran—reach the river, and with an instinct of self-preservation, threw himself flat upon the ground, behind a rock which jutted up near him. He could tell when it smote the forest, for the tremendous roar was pierced through with the snapping, crackling sound of immense trees, broken off like pipe-stems and hurled in a universal crash to the earth.

A short time he crouched where he was, held down, in fact, pressed, flattened, hurt by the trampling winds; but nothing else struck him, and presently he struggled to his feet.

What a spectacle met him, as he looked to the forest from which he had so lately emerged! A vast and overwhelming ruin, in the midst of which it seemed impossible that any life, animal or vegetable, should have escaped. A desolation, such as poets have pictured as clinging to the "last man," came over the soul of Philip Moore. Where were his friends? Where that gay party he had invited from their distant homes to meet his wife? Where was Alice, his wife of an hour? His manhood yielded to the blow; he cowered and sobbed like a child.

The darkness passed over for a brief time, only to come again with the setting sun, which had sent some brief gleams of light over the deserts to fire the ruin, through the storms, before sinking from sight. A drenching rain fell in torrents, the wind blew wildly and furiously.

"I will search for her—I will find her, and die beside her mangled remains," murmured Philip, arising and turning toward the forest.

The incessant flashes of lightning were his only lamps as he struggled through the intricate mazes of fallen trees. It was a task which despair, not hope, prompted, to toil through rain and wind and darkness, over and under and through splintered trunks and tangled foliage, looking, by the lightning's evanescent glare, for some glimpse of the white bridal robe of his beloved. The hours prolonged themselves into days and weeks to his suffering imagination, and still it was not morning. As if not content with the destruction already wrought, the elements continued to hurl their anger upon the prostrate wilderness; ever and anon the sharp tongue of the lightning would snap up some solitary tree which the wind had left in its hurry; half out of the fallen foliage, and the rain fell heavily. It was a strange bridal night.

Not knowing what moment he might stumble upon the crushed body of some one of his friends, Philip wandered through the storm. He felt more and more as if he were going mad—reason trembled and shuddered at his misfortunes. Two or three times he resolved to dash his brains out against a tree, to prevent himself the misery of going mad and yet living on in those dismal solitudes, till hunger conquered what grief refused to vanquish. Then the lightning would glimmer over some white object, perchance the bark freshly scalded from some shattered trunk, and he would hurry toward it, calling, "Alice?" as once she had called, "Philip," through a less writhed night.

It seemed to him that if no other morning began to come before long, the morning of eternity must open its gates upon the world; the strength of the tempest was spent; gusty puffs of wind swept past; here and there a star looked down hurriedly through the drizzling clouds; the solemn roll of the thunder resounded afar, like the drums of an enemy beating a retreat.

Exhausted, he sank at the foot of one of those Indian mounds common in western forests. A gleam of the vanishing lightning flickered over the scene. Hardly had it faded into darkness before a voice close to his side whispered his name; a warm hand felt through the night, touching his; a form glowing with life, soft, and tender, albeit its garments were cold and drenched, sunk into his outstretched arms.

"Yes, Philip, it is I—safe, unhurt. And you—are you unharmed?" He could not answer; his throat was choked with the sweetest tears which ever welled from a man's heart; he could only press her close, close, in the silence of speechless delight.

In that hour of reunion they knew not if they had a friend left; but the thought only drew them nearer to each other than ever they had or could have been before. Weary and still unbroken, but filled with a solemn joy, they clasped each other close and sank upon the wet sod, to sleep the sleep of exhaustion, until the morning should dawn upon them to light their search for their friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

GATHERING TOGETHER.

The first ray of morning startled the young couple from their sweet but troubled sleep.

"You shiver?" exclaimed Philip, looking at the damp, disordered attire of his wife; "I ought not to have allowed you to fall asleep in those wet garments."

"It is but a momentary chill, dear Philip. Oh, let us go and find my father. Certainty will be more endurable than this dreadful suspense."

They arose, pursuing their search through the gray dawn, which brightened soon into as glorious a September day as ever shone. There was no use in trying to convict Mother Nature of crime and bloodshed; she appeared totally unconscious of the waste and ruin she had spread over the land the previous day. Through the wrecked wilderness they struggled forward, silent, and looking in every direction for traces of their friends, and marking their way, as correctly as they could discern it, with the river for a guide, toward the home which they expected to find overwatered and scattered by the storm.

It was four or five hours before they came in sight of the cabin, so toilsome was their course; many times Alice had been obliged to rest, for hunger and fatigue were becoming overpowering, and now Philip had to support her almost entirely, as she clung to his arm.

"Take courage, dearest—there is the house, and standing, as I live!"

The storm, sweeping on, had just touched with its scattering edges the house, which was unroofed and the chimney blown down, and otherwise shaken and injured, though not totally demolished. As the two came in sight of it, they perceived old Pallas, sitting on the front step in an attitude of complete despondency, her apron thrown over her face, motionless and silent. She did not hear them nor see them until they stood by her side.

"Pallas! what is the news? Where is my father?"

The old woman flung her apron down with a mingled laugh and groan.

"O, my chile, my darlin', my pickaninny, is dat you, an' no mistake?" Springing up, she caught her young mistress to her bosom, and holding her there, laughed and scolded over her together. "Since I's seen you safe ag'in, and young masser too, ~~both~~ of you two an' soun', as I never 'spectied to behold on dis yearth ag'in, let me go now, long wid my ole man—Oh Lord, let thy servant depart in peace!"

"My father--have you heard from him since the storm?"

"No, darlin', not from one single soul, at dis awful night. De ladies dey were wid me till de mornin' break, den they set out, cryin' and weepin' and wringin' dear han's, to look for all you wia was in de wood. Oh, dis has been a trubble-some for a weddin'. I had a sense all de time siddin' wia goin' to happen. My poor ole man!"

"What's become of him?" asked Philip.

"De Lord above alone knows where he be now--an' he was tuk right up to glory, wid his weddin' garment on. I see him sailin' off, but I couldn't help him. Lawst if dat isn't a-goin' to faint dead over."

"Give her to me, and get something for her to eat and drink, if you can find it, Pallas. She's worn out."

"I've kep' up a fire in de kitchen, which is low, an' not much hurt. I'll spread a bed down dar' and lay her down on de floor till I make some right strong tea. Lord be merciful to me a sinner! It's times as make ole Pallas's heart ache. Come long wid me, masser--I'll tro a mattress on de floor. Dar', lay her down, I'll hab de tea direckly. Such sights as I see yesterday is 'fain to unsettle anybody as sets deir heart on de things ob dis world. When I heard my chile scream, I thought a kindly wad right trou me--I couldn't run, nor do nuthin', I was just as weak and triabiling. Dar' I stood, lookin' into de woods, wid everybody out ob sight, when I hear de storm a-comin'. First I thought it was de riber broking loose; I looked round, but dat was jes' as peaceable as a lamb. Here, Henry, set up and drink yer tea. Den I thought de wool is on fire, as dey was comin' when dey made such a roar, but dey wanta. Den I looked up to see if de sky was fikin', which was de first I saw ob de wind. It war' a-wlarlin' and a-roarin' like ober so many thousand hundred mill-wheels. It look for all de world like a big fan wif water pourin' tru. I was so scart I run back to de house, hearnin' fur my ole man, who was settin' on de fence, lookin' fonder way. But he didn't hear me. It went right past, he laid me up, to de wall, as ef I war' nubbl. I seen de air all full on choky flog, chickens and pigs and hens and truss, and I took my ole man right up off dat fence an' carried him out to de bay wort. I see him, wid my own eyes, runnin' like a mad pot ob de wind, way over de woods, way off, off, out on shore. Oh, missis, when I see him goin' so, I miss' wish I was him. I know Satern was a foolish nigger, and mighty sleepy-head. He war' no use to me natch--he was a great cross; but dat ole er was a better hearted husband. He had me like a chile. And he was so fond ob preserved plums, and such a kind to help 'bout de kitchen--pears to me I hasn't no heart. Dey know, what bus'ness I to speak my trouble, and you never to know where your own fader is. If he ever don't come back, I'll jes' lay down an' die. Poor ole nigger no more use. Dat's

Saturn tak away in de clouds, wid his bes' raiment on, as de Bible commands; and neber one mouffal ob de weldin'-feas' which is standin' on de table, and de rain leakin' down upon it—on! hit to?"

"Poor Pallas, I'm sorry for you. But, Philip, I must go—I feel stronger now."

"No, no, my own darling Alice, you are not fit for further exertion. Remain here in the hands of your nurse. Pallas, I leave my wife in your care. She is in a fever now. Change her clothing and give her hot drinks. I must be off. Keep up heart, dearest, till I get back."

He had hastily disposed of a cup of tea and a few mouthfuls of bread, kissed his bride, and was hurrying from the house, to go again into the woods for tidings, when a tumult outside drew a hasty to the door. Every one of the missing party, except poor old Sturn, whose case was hopeless—and the raftsmen did as well, were coming up in a group. Virginia and Mrs. Raymond had encountered them in their search for the clearing, and had led them out of the woods. Mr. Raymond and the clergyman had been together overtaken by the tempest; but it was not so severe, where they were, as in that part of the forest run by Mr. Wille and Philip. Trees had fallen before and around them, but they had escaped unharmed. Night coming on, and the rain and changed character of the scene bewildering them, they had not been able to make their way out of the woods; and of course had suffered from anxiety in common with their friends. Their astonishment and joy at beholding the bride and groom in safety were only held in check by the uncertainty which hung about the fate of their host. Not one went after the house until that fate was known; taking from Pallas's pockets and cold meat she brought them, they hastened back to tell Alice, who was really too ill from exposure and fatigue to make any further effort.

"I s'pose rest yourself, and try to be composed, honey. Ef yo' d'ar'ed fader is really taken away, you hab much to grieve for, but yer not left un-protected in this bleak world. You've a husband as loves you as his heart's blood—and he, for himself will stand in de heaben above, to think yo' fader is all was made right, and you with some one to care for you. Then you was tooken away. 'Dar', 'dar', don't hurt yo' self so bad so. I cried all night, and now dese poor ole eyes hab no more tears left. When I thought I was let all alone—no master, no missis, no husband—my heart was like a broken heart. I feel better now. Ef master war' here, I could tell him all, some of my afflictions. I mus' bustle roun' and bustle roun' for all dese tuck, hungry people to eat, and get them all done dried where de rain beat in. De table set, just as I wuz, when I was out here goin' for to put de coffee on, I s'pose, I cryin' scream. My poor ole man—he's gone up, sure,

for I saw him go. Saturn'll neber eat no more woodchuck pie in dis life—hi! hi! Now, now, pickaninny, guess who's comin' and who they're a-bringin'. You needn't jump out of yer skin, chile, if it is yer own fader—hurt, too, I'm afraid, by the way he looks."

Alice sprung to the door. Philip was lending her father the aid of his strong young arm. Mr. Wilde walked with difficulty, and his arm hung down in a helpless manner.

"Oh, father, are you hurt?"

"Nothing to speak of—not worth mentioning—a little bruised and my left arm broken. Positively, I don't feel a bit of pain, since I see you unharmed, my darling."

"But you'll come to a realizing sense of it, by the time we have set it, after it's going so long unattended to," said Philip.

"If I groan, punish me for it," replied the sturdy raftsman.

The broken limb was soon set and splintered, and the friends had time to look in each other's faces, and realize they were all together and safe.

"You have not told us how you escaped so remarkably," said they to Alice.

"Not another word at present," said Pallas, opening the door to the dining-room. "De weddin' feas' has not been eaten—such as it is ye mus' stan' in need of it. 'Tain't what it would have been yesterday—but I've done my bes' under the circumstances."

"Take my place, Philip. I'll lie here on this lounge, and when puss is through she can feed me."

"If missus'll cut up his food, I'll wait on massa."

As the declining energies of the party were recruited by the dinner, their spirits rose to something of the hilarity of the previous day; if it had not been for genuine sympathy with the sorrow of the old servant, mirth would have prevailed in proportion to their past distress. An occasional exclamation, smothered in its birth, told them their host was not quite so easy as he affected to be; but he would let no one pity him, bearing his pain with fortitude.

In the center of the table stood the bride's cake, a snowy pyramid, the triumph of Pallas's skill, wreathed about with garlands. It was fair to look upon, within and without, and sweet to the taste as agreeable to the eyes.

"Dar' was de whites of fifty eggs beaten up in dat cake," its maker declared, in an aside to Virginia.

"Then I should call it a very egg-spensive and egg-stravagant article," remarked Mr. Raymond, who had heard the assertion.

"'Tain't any too nice for de bride it was made fer, masser."

"There's a ring in it," said Alice, as she performed the duty of the occasion by cutting the cake. "Who has it?"

Everybody took their picce with curiosity, and finally Mr.

Irving held up the golden circlet, giving, at the same time, a glance toward Virginia, too expressive to be misunderstood.

"You'll be married next, Mr. Irving, and we hold ourselves all invited to the wedding," said Mrs. Raymond.

"I hope I may be," replied that gentleman, with a second glance toward the bride-maid; but she was looking to her late, and did not seem to hear him.

Virginia had pursued the art of flirtation too long to abandon it at once.

As they lingered over the closing cup of coffee, Alice related the circumstances which had probably saved her life. It seemed she could not endure to dwell upon the terror of her flight in that wild maniac's arms, passing it over as briefly as possible.

"When I had given up all hope of rescue, and felt as if actually dying from the terror of my situation, my abductor suddenly paused, before what seemed to be a small ledge of rock, such as frequently juts out of the ground in these woods, especially near the river. Pushing aside a vine which trailed thickly before it, he thrust me into the mouth of a cave, but instead of following me in, as I expected, he drew the vine carefully over it again, and sprung away, singing:

"I'll hide the maid in a cypress-tree,
When the footstep of death is near."

"The feeling of exquisite relief which came to me in that moment was quickly superseded by the thought of his speedy return. While I stood there, trembling, waiting for him to get out of sight and hearing, in the hope that I might creep out and elude him, I heard the roar of the approaching tempest. Peering through the foliage, I felt my rocky shelter tremble, and saw the forest fall prostrate. As soon as the first shock was over, I crept out, thinking nothing but of the destruction of my friends. Too distracted to feel any personal fear, I wandered through the storm, I knew not how many hours, until, by the merest chance, a flash of lightning revealed Philip, not four feet away from me."

"The first thing you did, I suppose, was to give him a curtain-lecture, for staying out nights," remarked Mr. Raymond.

"And now, dear father, I think the roof blew off, and the house blew to pieces almost, and your arm was broken, on purpose to convince you of the necessity of spending your winter with us. It would be foolish to try to make this comfortable again, this fall. Your men can put a roof on, to protect it from the weather, and we'll leave it to its fate."

"Since he's disabled and can't defend himself, we'll take him captive," said Philip.

"Have it as you like, children, I expect to be led around by apron-strings after this. Next spring I'll take Virginia, and come back here, and will put up the handsomest mansion that

ever graced this river-side—it shall be large enough to accommodate the whole family, present ~~and~~ prospective. "You needn't color up, little girl—I was only thinking of Virginia's future spouse—eh, Virginia—what's Mr. Irving blushing for?"

"I don't know—men should never blush—it's a weakness."

"I wish I could be as unmoved as you," he whispered in her ear, for he sat by her side. "It would be more becoming to me than it is to you. Women were made to blush and tremble."

"Were they, Mr. Irving? Then you'd better leave those things to them, and not be intruding upon their sphere."

"Perhaps I shall obey you, Miss Moore," he said, recovering all his coolness.

She felt that he was a man not to be trifled with. Sensitive and full of sensibility as he might be, he was not the man to let a woman put her foot on his neck. He might worship the foot, but he would not submit to be trampled upon by it. He would love, truly and deeply, but he must be respected and loved in return. His was just the spirit fitted to take the reins and curb the too headstrong and willful disposition of Virginia—under the control of a wise and gentle nature like his, her faults might change into virtues.

Philip was secretly regarding them, delighted to see how soon he recovered his self-possession, and how quietly he made his companion feel it. He saw that she fretted under it, and finally, giving up, exerted herself to be friendly and agreeable.

"They will be well matched. I never saw a better mate for my naughty cousin. I had an idea of it, when I invited him to act as groomsman. She'll be a good while giving up, though."

That Virginia would not yield to this new mastership very soon was evident. When they had left the dining-room, and were standing on the portico, Mr. Irving desired to place the ring which had fallen to him upon her finger—but she refused it with considerable *hauteur*.

"I only desired you to wear it for safe-keeping. It's a lady's ring, and I don't know what to do with it. Mrs. Raymond, will you accept it?"

He placed it on the finger of the married lady with as pleasant an air, as if it had been accepted when he first offered it.

"I ought not to wear it; give it to some fair maiden."

"There is but one, and she will not have it. If there were others, I should certainly offer it. So you see it is chance only that has left it to you."

"Well, I'm not very much flattered, Mr. Irving—but the ring is just as pretty, and I ought to be thankful to chance."

So the ring was lost to Virginia, without the satisfaction of her having annoyed the one who offered it.

CHAPTER XV.

BEN AND ALICE.

"Now that the wedding-feast is disposed of, I must remind you all that there is yet work to be done. I have not heard from the mill; and poor old Saturn must be searched for, as well as that unfortunate young man who has made us so much trouble. It frets me to think I can do nothing. Philip, you must do service in place of my broken arm."

The party were making ready to go out again, when two or three men came from the mill, to inquire after the family, and to relate to the captain the story of the vast damage his property had sustained.

"Oh, what is de riches of dis worl', masser," said Pallas, as she, too, paused from her work to hear their interesting narrative of wreck and chaos upon every side, with accounts which had reached them from people further down, where the tornado had made a yet more terrible visitation. "What is de riches of dis worl', when a bref of de Almighty can sweep 'em away like as dey were dust and trash. My ole masser he turn you 'way, 'cause yer had no riches, and your chile-wife, she die of grief; and you come out here and work and work in de wilderness half as long as de chil'en of Israel—and you set your foot down you will be rich, and your chile shall have much to gib her husband when she got one—and de storm come, and all yer pine-trees is laid low, and yer mill-wheel is broken at de fountain, and your riches pass 'way in de whirlwind."

"It's time for me to begin thinking of these things I suppose, Pallas. But, as to my losses—I can stand 'em. My wood-choppers must work briskly this winter, among this fallen timber—and as for the old mill, I think it has gone to pieces to hasten the fulfillment of my plan of erecting a steam-mill in its place. I've worked for Alice, and now I must work for Virginia."

"Let us, at least," said the clergyman, who was standing by, "be reminded of our duty by this humble colored woman—let us offer up thanks for our wonderful preservation."

All knelt, except the disabled raftsmen, while the minister offered up a hearty thanksgiving, when the party set forth into the tangled forest again. Alice, who had been overcome more by anxiety than by fatigue, was so recruited, that she insisted upon going with Philip. Her familiarity with the woods she thought would enable her to trace the way to the spot where Ben would doubtless be found a corpse; the fact that he was high in the branches of a tall tree when the tempest struck the spot, making it almost certain that he was destroyed. Two or three foresters, Raymond, and Philip, followed their guide as

she wound through and climbed over matted branches and fallen trunks, pausing occasionally for some trace of the familiar aspect of yesterday. In many places the forest looked actually as if a band of giant reapers had passed that way and mowed down the trees in mighty swathes. Again, when the tornado had taken a more whirling movement, the great trunks would be twisted and snapped off in long splinters, ten or twelve feet from the ground. An overwhelming sense of the terrific power of their unwelcome visitor oppressed them, as they beheld its ravages in the broad daylight.

"And yet, dear Philip, it may have been sent by Providence to save me from a fearful fate—or at least, it *did* save me, and I am grateful—oh, so grateful," whispered the young wife, as Philip assisted her over a huge tree which lay, torn up by the roots, across their path.

"It must have been somewhere about here," she said, presently.

"I am sure I have no idea of the locality," answered Philip.

"Yes! there is the ledge of rocks, and the cavern into which he thrust me. Poor Ben! I forgive him all. I hardly dare go on—I am afraid I shall see some dreadful sight;" and she shuddered.

"Perhaps you had better rest yourself, while we search this vicinity closely."

"Oh, no! I am too nervous to be left alone. I will keep by your side," and she clung to his arm, growing paler every moment, and scarcely daring to look before her.

"Hush!" exclaimed one of the foresters, half an hour later, turning back toward the young couple who were some distance behind. "Don't let her come near. We have found him; he's dead as a hammer."

Alice sat down upon a fallen tree-trunk, faint and trembling.

"Stay here, dearest, a few moments. I will come back to you;" and Philip went forward with the men to where, amid the ruins of the forest, Ben lay, a crushed and senseless human thing. He was dreadfully mutilated, and to every appearance dead. They dragged him out from under the heavy branches, and as they did so, a low groan startled them. One of the men sunk down and took the head upon his knee.

"Where's Alice?"

Ben unclosed his eyes, as he asked the question, moving them about from one face to another with a searching glance.

"I'm dying—bring her quick. Oh, do bring her, won't you?"

The gasping voice was loud and thrilling in the eagerness of its entreaty. Philip turned away and went for his wife.

"Do you think you can bear the sight?"

"If he wishes to see me, I shall not deny a dying man. He took many a step for me, in his better days—poor boy."

Ben seemed to distinguish her footsteps as she drew near. He could not stir, but his eyes turned in that direction.

"Are you cryin' for me?" he asked, as she stood by his side, the tears flowing down her cheeks like rain. "It's enough to make a man die happy to see you cryin' for him, Alice."

"Oh, Ben! I wish I could help you," she sobbed.

"I'm past earthly help, and I'm glad of it. It's the best thing could happen to a used-up fellow like me. I don't blame you for it, Alice, but I'm to blame for things I've done, and I want to ask you to forgive me. My head's been on fire for weeks. I've been in a strange state—I can't recall what I've did or said. Then I got hurt, I don't know how—and when I could think again that burning pain in my head was gone. I knew I was dyin', and I wanted to see you. I wanted to carry the pictur' of your face to the next world. I shouldn't be ashamed to show it to the angels—if they'll have any thing to do with a poor, ignorant fellow like me, as Pallas said they would. You're married, ain't you?"

"She is my wife," said Phillip, gently, taking her hand.

"It made me crazy to think of it once; but it's over now. Alice, you're my blessin' and my wishes that you may be happy all your life. Forgive me the trouble I've made ye, and may you and him be happy long after the grass grows over poor Ben Perkins."

Alice sobbed aloud, and the rough men standing around were grave and silent. The last sentence had been spoken in a whisper, and it was evident that life was ebbing away rapidly. He closed his eyes, and the sweat gathered on the pallid face, but a short time since rich with the olive and crimson of health and youth.

"I shan't be twenty-two till next month," he whispered with shut eyes. "Put it on my tombstone, and let 'em pat on it:

"Oh his heart, his heart was broken,
For the love of Alice Wilde."

They stood looking at him.

"Alice—good by. Alice—where are you? Alice!"

"Here, Ben—here I am;" but she spoke to a corpse.

He died with the name of the woman he had loved with all the power of his passionate nature trembling upon his last breath.

The next day they buried him in a lonely spot on the bank of the river, and, spite of all his errors and crimes, he was not unwept and unmemorial. Once he had been gay and frank, kind and honest, handsome and merry—and the memory of his good qualities swept away the judgment passed upon his later actions.

Poor Satan's remains were not discovered; and Pallas, with the superstition of her class, was inclined to believe that he had been translated bodily, in the chariot of the wind, to that better

world of which they had spoken so much together. It was a pleasant belief, and afforded her great consolation.

"He allers was so fond of dressin', and good choices; and he'd been taken up in his new suit as if a-purposin' to please him. Ef he'd only partaken of de weddin' feast, he couldn't had been better prepared 'an he was. Hi! hi!"

It was a picturesque-looking party which sent I away from Wilde's mill one brilliant day in September.

"One doesn't see such a bridal-party every day, or take such a bridal tour," remarked Virginia to the groomsmen by her side. "It's better than six fashionable weddings, with the usual routine. I used to have a contempt for the romantic—but I'm beginnin' to like it."

Yes, even the aristocratic Virginia, the beautiful metropolitan, began to be infatuated with the romance of the West.

We may yet hear of more remarkable changes than her change of opinion. We may yet see a villa, charming as those will, a grace our lordly Hudson, rising amid the elms and maples on the banks of that fairer Western river—for love, beauty, taste, and money can accomplish wonders more surprising than making the wilderness blossom like a rose—and "old West" And the lamp is no myth.

But, for the present, we will leave this picturesque party sailing down this broad, silver river in the purple and gold of an autumn day—leave it to its joyous light, and leave that new-made grave to its silence and shadow.

STANDARD DIME DIALOGUES

For School Exhibitions and Home Entertainments.

No. 1 to 21 inclusive. 15 to 16 Pgs. in Dialects and Drama in each book. Each volume 100
Dime Books, sent post paid, on account, by mail, to any address.

Beadle & Adams, Publishers, 88 William St., N. Y.

These volumes have been prepared with especial reference to their adaptability for Exhibitions, School entertainments, and as a winter diversion for the amateur dramatics. They are intended for the use of every age, both boys and girls. It is their aim to make them of interest to the young, at any time, through many varied and attractive dialogues and scenes of wit, pleasure, humor and sentiment.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 1.

Meeting of the Miners. For young ladies.
Living a Life of Ease. For two males.
Young Corporation. For males and females.
Lesson. For two ladies.
The Rehearsal. For six boys.
Young Friends. For two boys.
The Queen of May. For two young girls.
The Tea-Party. For four ladies.
The Two Scenes in Wasted Life. Males and females.
Mr. Smith's Classroom. For males and females.
The Discussion of Two Days. For young ladies.

Hab-boing. For two speakers.
The Secret of Success. For two speakers.
Young American. Three males and two females.
Josephine's Destiny. Four females, one male.
The Folly of the Devil. For three male speakers.
Degradation. For three male speakers.
Two Ignorant Children. For two boys.
The Fast Young Man. For two males.
The Year's Rolling. 17 females and 1 male.
The Village with One Gentleman. For eight females and one male.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 2.

The Genius of Liberty. Females and 1 female.
Concerning a Coal Mine and Miner.
Young and Old. Several characters.
The Doctor. Two males and two females.
Twins of the Happy Queen. Several females.
Twain and Dixie. For two characters.
Two Country Girls Visit to the City. For several characters.
Two Friends. For two males.
Two of the Chorus. For two males.
Two Friends. For several characters.
Two Friends. For several characters.

How to Write "Peculiar" Stories. Two males.
The New and the Old. For two males.
A Sonnet at Last. For two males.
The Queen. For two males.
The True Men of Science. For four males.
The Old Lad is Well. For four males.
The Little Bullock. For two male girls.
How to Find an Heir. For five males.
The Virtues. For young ladies.
A Commercial Empire.
The Home. For males and one female.
The English Traveler. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 3.

The May Queen. For an entire school.
Living in a Forest. For ten males.
Living Brightly. A Farce. For females.
Concerning a Coal Mine. Two males, 1 female.
National Representative. A Riddle. 4 males.
Scraping the Bush. For two characters.

The Gentle Cook. For two males.
Mr. and Mrs. For two males and two females.
The Two Friends. For two males.
The Santa. Several. For two males.
How to Write the White Heather. 4 males, 1 female.
The Happy Cook. A household. For one male.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 4.

The Frost King. For ten or more persons.
Stranger in Town. Three males and two females.
Paul, Jessie and Charlie. For three characters.
Tom and Jim. For two males and one female.
The May. A Farce. For two female.
The Gentleman Farmer. For a male and two females.
How to Write a Riddle. For two characters.
Concerning a Forest. For two characters.
Concerning a Discussion. For twenty males.

The Southern Volunteer. 2 males, 1 female.
Concerning "Peculiar." For four males.
The Captain. For three males and one female.
Green and Brown. For three characters.
Old and Young. A Comedy. For two boys.
Young and Old. For two males.
The Gentleman Farmer. For two characters.
Concerning a Comedy. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 5.

Concerning a Forest. For characters.
Concerning a Forest. For characters.

Concerning a Comedy. For two males.
Concerning a Comedy. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 6.

The War of the Roses. Males and females.
Concerning a Forest. For characters.
Concerning a Forest. For characters.

The Gentleman Farmer. For three characters.
Concerning a Forest. For characters.
Concerning a Forest. For two males and two females.
Concerning a Forest. For two females and one male.
Concerning a Forest. For a male and a female.
Concerning a Forest. For two characters.
Concerning a Forest. For two characters.

Dime School Series—Dialogues.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 7.

The two beggars. For fourteen females.
The earth-child in fairy-land. For girls.
Twenty years hence. Two females, one male.
The way to Windham. For two males.
Wom'an. A people passage at wom'a. Two boys.
The 'O'-gica. A Colloquy. For two males.
How to get rid of a bore. For several boys.
Boarding-school. Two males and two females.
Plea for the plague. For two males.
The ills of drain-drinking. For three boys.
True pride. A colloquy. For two females.
The two lecturers. For numerous males.

Two views of life. Colloquy. For two females.
The rights of music. For two females.
A hopeless case. A query in verse. Two girls.
The would-be school-teacher. For two males.
Come to life too soon. For three males.
Eight o'clock. For two little girls.
True dignity. A colloquy. For two boys.
Grief two expensive. For two males.
Hamlet and the ghost. For two persons.
Little red riding hood. For two females.
New application of an old rule. Boys and girls.
Colored cousin. A colloquy. For two males.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 8.

The fairy School. For a number of girls.
The enrolling officer. Three girls and two boys.
The base ball enthusiast. For three boys.
The girl of the period. For three girls.
The fowl rebellion. Two males and one female.
Slow but sure. Several males and two females.
Caudle's velocipede. One male and one female.
The figures. For several small children.
The trial of Peter Sloper. For seven boys.

Getting a photograph. Males and females.
The society for general improvement. For girls.
A nobleman in disguise. Three girls, six boys.
Great expectations. For two boys.
Playing school. Five females and four males.
Clothes for the heathen. One male, one female.
A hard case. For three boys.
Ghosts. For ten females and one male.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 9.

Advertising for help. For a number of females.
America to England, greeting. For two boys.
The old and the new. Four females one male.
Choices of trades. For twelve little boys.
The lap-dog. For two females.
The victim. For four females and one male.
The duelist. For two boys.
True true philosophy. For females and males.
A good education. For two females.

The law of human kindness. For two females.
Spoiled children. For a mixed school.
Brutus and Cæsarius.
Coriolanus and Aufidus.
The new scholar. For a number of girls.
The self-made man. For three males.
The May queen (No. 2.) For a school.
Mrs. Lackland's economy. 4 boys and 3 girls.
Should women be given the ballot? For boys.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 10.

Mrs. Mark Twain's shoe. One male, one female.
The old flag. School festival. For three boys.
The court of folly. For many girls.
Great lives. For six boys and six girls.
Scandal. For numerous males and females.
The light of love. For two boys.
The flower children. For twelve girls.
The deaf uncle. For three boys.
A discussion. For two boys.

The rehearsal. For a school.
The true way. For three boys and one girl.
A practical life lesson. For three girls.
The monk and the soldier. For two boys.
1776-1876. School festival. For two girls.
Lord Dundreary's Visit. 9 males and 7 females.
Witches in the cream. For 3 girls and 2 boys.
Frenchman. Charade. Numerous characters.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 11.

Appearances are very deceitful. For six boys.
The conundrum family. For male and female.
Caring Betty. Three males and four females.
Jack and the beanstalk. For five characters.
The way to do it and not to do it. 3 females.
How to become healthy, etc. Males and females.
The only true life. For two girls.
Classic colloquies. For two boys.
I. Gustavus Vasa and Cristiern.
II. Tamerlane and Bajazet.

Fashionable dissipation. For two little girls.
A school charade. For two boys and two girls.
Jean Ingelow's "Songs of Seven." Seven girls.
A debate. For four boys.
Ragged Dick's lesson. For three boys.
School charade, with tableau.
A very questionable story. For two boys.
A poll. For three males.
The real gentleman. For two boys.

DIME DIALOGUES NO. 12.

Yankee assurance. For several characters.
Bom-boms wanted. For several characters.
When I was young. For two girls.
The most precious heritage. For two boys.
The double euro. Two males and four females.
The flower-garden fairies. For five little girls.
Jemima's novel. Three males and two females.
Beware of the widows. For three girls.

A family not to pattern after. Ten characters.
How to manage. An acting charade.
The vacation escapade. Four boys and teacher.
That naughty boy. Three females and a male.
Mad-cam. An acting charade.
All is not gold that glitters. Acting proverb.
Sic transit gloria mundi. Acting charade.

DIME DIALOGUES NO. 13.

Two o'clock in the morning. For three males.
An indignation meeting. For several females.
Before and behind the scenes. Several characters.
The noblest boy. A number of boys and teacher.
Ida Beard. A dress piece. For girls and boys.
Not so bad as it seems. For several characters.
A carbuncle moral. For two males and female.
Sense vs. sentiment. For parlor and exhibition.

Worth, not wealth. For four boys and a teacher.
No such word as fail. For several males.
The sleeping beauty. For a school.
An innocent intrigue. Two males and a female.
Old Nabby, the fortune-teller. For three girls.
Boy-talk. For several little boys.
Mother is dead. For several little girls.
A practical illustration. For two boys and girls.

Dime School Series—Dialogues.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 14.

Mrs. Jonas Jones. Three gents and two ladies.
The born genius. For four gents.
More than one listener. For four gents and lady.
Who on earth is he! For three girls.
The right not to be a pauper. For two boys.
Woman nature will out. For a girls' school.
Benedict and bachelor. For two boys.
The cost of a dress. For five persons.
The surprise party. For six little girls.
A practical demonstration. For three boys.

Refinement. Acting charade. Several characters.
Conscience, the arbiter. For lady and gent.
How to make mothers happy. For two boys.
A conclusive argument. For two girls.
A woman's blindness. For three girls.
Rum's work (Temperance). For four gents.
The fatal mistake. For two young ladies.
Eyes and nose. For one gent and one lady.
Retribution. For a number of boys.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 15.

The fairies' escapade. Numerous characters.
A poet's perplexities. For six gentlemen.
A home cure. For two ladies and one gent.
The good there is in each. A number of boys.
Gentlemen or monkey. For two boys.
The little philosopher. For two little girls.
Aunt Polly's lesson. For four ladies.
A wind-fall. Acting charade. For a number.
Will it pay! For two boys.

The heir-at-law. For numerous males.
Don't believe what you hear. For three ladies.
A sister's rule. For three ladies.
The chief's resolve. Extract. For two males.
Testing her friends. For several characters.
The foreigner's trouble. For two ladies.
The cat without an owner. Several characters.
Natural selection. For three gentlemen.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 16.

Polly Ann. For four ladies and one gentleman.
The meeting of the winds. For a school.
The good they did. For six ladies.
The boy who wins. For six gentlemen.
Good-by day. A colloquy. For three girls.
The sick well man. For three boys.
The investigating committee. For nine ladies.
A "corner" in Roger. For four boys.

The imps of the trunk room. For five girls.
The boasters. A Colloquy. For two little girls.
Kitty's funeral. For several little girls.
Stratagem. Charade. For several characters.
Testing her scholars. For numerous scholars.
The world is what we make it. Two girls.
The old and the new. For gentleman and lady.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 17.

LITTLE FOLKS' SPEECHES AND DIALOGUES.

To be happy you must be good. For two little girls and one boy.
Ev. present glory. For a bevy of boys.
The little peacemaker. For two little girls.
What arts friends. For two little girls.
Martha Washington tea party. For five little girls in old-time costume.
The evil there is in it. For two young boys.
Wise and foolish little girl. For two girls.
A child's inquiries. For small child and teacher.
The cooking club. For two girls and others.
How to do it. For two boys.
A hundred years to come. For boy and girl.
Don't trust faces. For several small boys.
Above the skies. For two small girls.
The true heroism. For three little boys.
Give us little boys a chance; The story of the plum pudding; I'll be a man; A little girl's rights speech; Johnny's opinion of grandmothers; The boasting hen; He knows best; A small boy's view of corns; Robby's

sermon; Nobody's child; Nutting at grandpa Gray's; Little boy's view of how Columbus discovered America; Little girl's view; Little boy's speech on time; A little boy's pocket; The midnight murder; Robby Rob's second sermon; How the baby came; A boy's observations; The new slate; A mother's love; The crownin' glory; Baby Lulu; Josh Billings on the bumble-bee, wren, alligator; Died yesterday; The chicken's mistake; The heir apparent; Deliver us from evil; Don't want to be good; Only a drunken fellow; The two little robins; Be slow to condemn; A nonsense tale; Little boy's declamation; A child's desire; Bogus; The goblin cat; Rub-a-dub; Calumny; Little chatterbox; Where are they; A boy's view; The twenty frogs; Going to school; A morning bath; The girl of Dundee; A fancy; In the sunlight; The new laid egg; The little musician; Idle Ben; Pottery-minn; Then and now.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 18.

Fairy wishes. For several characters.
No rose wi' bout a thorn. 9 males and 1 female.
Too greedy by half. For three males.
One good turn deserves another. For 8 ladies.
Courtship Melinda. For 3 boys and 1 lady.
The new scholar. For several boys.
The little intercessor. For four ladies.
Accidents. For 3 gentlemen and 3 ladies.

Give a dog a bad name. For four gentlemen.
Spring-time wishes. For six little girls.
Lost Charlie; or, the gipsy's revenge. For numerous characters.
A little tramp. For three little boys.
Hard times. For 2 gentlemen and 4 ladies.
The lesson well worth learning. For two males and two females.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 19.

An awful mystery. Two females and two males.
Contentment. For five little boys.
Who are the saints? For three young girls.
California angle. Three males and three females.
Be kind to the poor. A little folks' play.
How people are insured. A "duet."
Mayor. Acting charade. For four characters.
The smoke fiend. For four boys.
A kindergarten dialogue. For a Christmas Festival. Personated by seven characters.
The use of study. For three girls.

The refined simpletons. For four ladies.
Remember Benson. For three males.
Modern education. Three males and one female.
Mad with too much love. For three males.
The fairy's warning. Dress piece. For two girls.
Aunt Eunice's experiment. For several.
The mysterious G. G. Two females and one male.
We'll have to mortgage the farm. For one male and two females.
An old-fashioned duet.
The auction. For numerous characters.

DIME DIALECT SPEAKER, No. 23.

Dat's wat's de matter,
The Mississippi miracle,
'en te tide cooms in,
Dose laans vot Mary ha/
got,
Pat O'Flaherty on wo-
man's rights,
The home rulers, how
they "spakes,"
Hezekiah Dawson on
Mothers-in-law,
He didn't sell the farm,
The true story of Frank-
lin's kite,
I would I were a boy
again,
A pathetic story,

All about a bee,
Scandal,
A dark side view,
Te peaser vay,
On learning German,
Mary's shmall vite lamb
A healthy discourse,
Tobias so to speak,
Old Mrs. Grimes,
A parody,
Mars and cats,
Bill Underwood, pilot,
Old Grasley,
The pill peddler's ora-
tion,
Vidder Green's last
words,

Latest Chinese outrage,
The manifest destiny of
the Irishman,
Peggy McCann,
Sprays from Josh Bil-
lings,
De circumstances ob de
sitiuation,
Dar's nuffin new under
de sun,
A Negro religious poem,
That violin,
Picnic delights,
Our candidate's views,
Dundreary's wisdom,
Plain language by truth-
ful Jane,

My neighbor's du-
Condensed Mythology
Pictus,
The Nereides,
Legends of Attica,
The stov & ulpe tragedie
A doketor's drubbles,
The com'ng man,
The illigant affair at
Muldoon's,
That little baby rot 't
the corner,
A genewine infernac
An invitation to a
bird of liberty,
The crow,
Out west.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 26.

Poor cousins. Three ladies and two gentlemen.
Mountains and mole-hills. Six ladies and several
spectators.
A test that did not fail. Six boys.
Two ways of seeing things. Two little girls.
Don't count your chickens before they are
hatched. Four ladies and a boy.
All is fair in love and war. 3 ladies, 2 gentlemen.
How uncle Josh got rid of the legacy. Two males,
with several transformations.

The lesson of mercy. Two very small girls.
Practice what you preach. Four ladies.
Politician. Numerous characters.
The canvassing agent. Two males and two
females.
Grub. Two males.
A slight scare. Three females and one male.
Embodyed sunshine. Three young ladies.
How Jim Peters died. Two males.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 27.

Patsy O'Dowd's campaign. For three males
and one female.
Hasty inferences not always just. Numerous
boys.
Discontented Annie. For several girls.
A double surprise. Four males and one female.
What was it? For five ladies.
What will care them! For a lady and two boys.
Independent. For numerous characters.
Each season the best. For four boys.
Tried and found wanting. For several males.
A boy's plot. For several characters.

The street girl's good angel. For two ladies and
two l' the girls.
"That ingratiable little nigger." For two males.
If I had the money. For three little girls.
Appearances are deceitful. For several ladies
and one gentleman.
Love's protest. For two little girls.
An enforced cure. For several characters.
Those who preach and those who perform. For
three males.
A gentle conquest. For two young girls.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 28.

A test that told. For six young ladies and two
gentlemen.
Organizing a debating society. For four boys.
The awakening. For four little girls.
The rebuke proper. For 3 gentlemen, 2 ladies.
Exorcising an evil spirit. For six ladies.
Both sides of the fence. For four males.
The spirits of the wood. For two troupes of girls.

No room for the dove. For three little boys.
Arm-chair. For numerous characters.
Measure for measure. For four girls.
Saved by a dream. For two males and two
females.
An infallible sign. For four boys.
A good use for money. For six little girls.
An agreeable profession. For several characters.

The above books are sold by Newsdealers everywhere, or will be sent, post-paid, to any
address, on receipt of price, 10 cents each.

BEADLE & ADAMS, Publishers, 98 William St., N. Y.

STANDARD BOOKS OF GAMES AND PASTIMES

READLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.

DIME BASE-BALL PLAYER FOR 1880.

Containing the League and National Club Averages for 1879, together with the Model Games of the season. The prize winners in the National Championship, and new chapters on Batting, Fielding, and Base Running. Also, a New Scoring System, with record of the Metropolitan Championship Games and Pacific League Averages. Edited by Henry Chadwick.

HAND-BOOK OF CROQUET.

A Complete Guide to the Principles and Practice of the Game. This popular pastime has, during the few years of its existence, rapidly outgrown the first vague and imperfect rules and regulations of its inventor; and, as almost every house at which it is played adopts a different code of laws, it becomes a difficult matter for a stranger to assimilate his play to that of other people. It is, therefore, highly desirable that one uniform system should be generally adopted, and hence the object of this work is to establish a recognized method of playing the game.

DIME BOOK OF 100 GAMES.

Out-door and in-door SUMMER GAMES for Tourists and Families in the Country, Picnics, etc., comprising 100 Games, Forfeits and Conundrums for Childhood and Youth, Single and Married, Grave and Gay. A Pocket Hand-book for the Summer Season.

CRICKET AND FOOT-BALL.

A desirable Cricketer's Companion, containing complete instructions in the elements of Bowling, Batting and Fielding; also the Revised Laws of the Game; Remarks on the Duties of Umpires; the Mary-le-Bone Cricket Club Rules and Regulations; Bets, etc. By Henry Chadwick.

HAND-BOOK OF PEDESTRIANISM.

Giving the Rules for Training and Practice in Walking, Running, Leaping, Vaulting, etc. Edited by Henry Chadwick.

YACHTING AND ROWING.

This volume will be found very complete as a guide to the conduct of watercraft, and full of interesting information alike to the amateur and the novice. The chapter referring to the great rowing-match of the Oxford and Cambridge clubs on the Thames, will be found particularly interesting.

RIDING AND DRIVING.

A sure guide to correct Horsemanship, with complete directions for the road and field; and a specific section of directions and information for female equestrians. Drawn largely from "Stonehenge's" fine manual, this volume will be found all that can be desired by those seeking to know all about the horse, and his management in harness and under the saddle.

GUIDE TO SWIMMING.

Comprising Advisory Instructions; Rules upon Entering the Water; General Directions for Swimming; Diving; How to Come to the Surface; Swimming on the Back; How to Swim in times of Danger; Surf-bathing—How to Manage the Waves, the Tides, etc.; a Chapter for the Ladies; a Specimen Female Swimming School; How to Manage Cases of Drowning; Dr. Franklin's Code for Swimmers; etc. Illustrated. By Capt. Philip Peterson.

For sale by all newsdealers; or sent, post-paid, to any address, on receipt of price—TEN CENTS each.

READLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS, 98 WILLIAM ST., N. Y.

BEADLE'S NEW DIME NOVELS.

322 Old Grizzly.
 323 Dashing Dragoons.
 324 Will-o'-the-Wisp.
 325 Dashing Dick.
 326 Old Crossfire.
 327 Ben Bramble.
 328 Brigand Captain.
 329 Old Strategy.
 330 Gray Hair, Chief.
 331 Prairie Tigerz.
 332 Rival Hunters.
 333 Texan Scout.
 334 Zebra Zack.
 335 Masked Messenger.
 336 Morgan, the Pirate.
 337 The Boy Spy.
 338 Table, the Trailer.
 339 The Boy Chief.
 340 Tim, the Trailer.
 341 Red Ax, the Giant.
 342 Stella, the Spy.
 343 White Avenger.
 344 The Indian King.
 345 The Long Trail.
 346 Kirk, the Guide.
 347 The Phantom Trail.
 348 The Apache Guide.
 349 The Mad Miner.
 350 Koen-eye, Ranger.
 351 Blue Belt, Guide.
 352 On the Trail.
 353 The Specter Spy.
 354 Old Bald-head.
 355 Red Knife, Chief.
 356 Sib Con-, Trapper.
 357 The Bear-Hunter.
 358 Bashful Bill, Spy.
 359 The White Chief.
 360 Cortina, the Scourge.
 361 The Squaw Spy.
 362 Scout of '76.
 363 Spanish Jack.
 364 Masked Spy.
 365 Kirk, the Renegade.
 366 Dingle, the Outlaw.
 367 The Green Ranger.
 368 Montbars, Scourge.

369 Metamora.
 370 Thornpath, Trailer.
 371 Foul-wea her Jack.
 372 The Black Rider.
 373 The Helpless Hand.
 374 The Lake Rangers.
 375 Alone on the Plains.
 376 Phantom Horseman.
 377 Winona.
 378 Silent Shot.
 379 The Phantom Ship.
 380 The Red Rider.
 381 Grizzly-Hunters.
 382 The Mad Ranger.
 383 The Specter Skipper.
 384 The Red Coyote.
 385 The Hunchback.
 386 The Black Wizard.
 387 The Mad Horseman.
 388 Privateer's Bride.
 389 Jaguar Queen.
 390 Shadow Jack.
 391 Eagle Plume.
 392 Ocean Outlaw.
 393 Red Slayer.
 394 The Phantom foe.
 395 Blue Anchor.
 396 Red-skin's Pledge.
 397 Quadroon Spy.
 398 Black Rover.
 399 Red Belt.
 400 The Two Trails.
 401 The Ice-Flend.
 402 The Red Prince.
 403 The First Trail.
 404 Sheet-Anchor Tom.
 405 Old Avoirdupois.
 406 White Gladiator.
 407 Blue Clipper.
 408 Red Dan.
 409 The Fire-Eater.
 410 Blackhawk.
 411 The Lost Ship.
 412 Black Arrow.
 413 White Serpent.
 414 The Lost Captain.
 415 The Twin Trailers.

416 Death's Head Ran-
ger.
 417 Captain of Captains.
 418 Warrior Princess.
 419 The Blue Band.
 420 The Squaw Chief.
 421 The Flying Scout.
 422 Sonora Ben.
 423 The Sea King.
 424 Mountain Gid.
 425 Death-Trailer.
 426 The Crested Serpent.
 427 Arkansas Kit.
 428 The Corsair Prince.
 429 Ethan Allen's Rifles.
 430 Little Thunderbolt.
 431 The Falcon Rover.
 432 Honest Hand.
 433 The Stone Chief.
 434 The Gold Demon.
 435 Entawan, Slaver.
 436 The Naked Guide.
 437 The Conspirators.
 438 Swiftwing, Squaw.
 439 Caribou Zip.
 440 The Privateer.
 441 The Black Spy.
 442 The Doomed Hunter.
 443 Barden, the Ranger.
 444 Th. Gray Scalp.
 445 The Peddler Spy.
 446 The White Canoe.
 447 Eph Peters.
 448 The Two Hunters.
 449 The Traitor Spy.
 450 The Gray Hunter.
 451 Little Moccasin.
 452 The White Hermit.
 453 The Island Bride.
 454 The Forest Princess.
 455 The Trail Hunters.
 456 Backwoods Banditti.
 457 Ruby Roland.
 458 Laughing Eyes.
 459 Mohican Maiden.
 460 The Quaker Scout.
 461 Sumter's Scouts.

462 The Five Champions.
 463 The Two Guards.
 464 Quindaro.
 465 Rob Ruskin.
 466 The Rival Rovers.
 467 Ned Starling.
 468 Single Hand.
 469 Tippy, the Texan.
 470 Young Mustanger.
 471 The Hunted Life.
 472 The Buffalo Trapper.
 473 Old Zip.
 474 Foghorn Phil.
 475 Moosefoot, the Brave.
 476 Snow-Bird.
 477 Dragoon's Bride.
 478 Old Honesty.
 479 Bald Eagle.
 480 Black Princess.
 481 The White Brave.
 482 The Rifleman of the
Miami.
 483 The Moose Hunter.
 484 The Brigantine.
 485 Pat Pomfret's Ward.
 486 Simple Phil.
 487 Jo Davies's Client.
 488 Ruth Harland.
 489 The Gulch Miners.
 490 Captain Nelly.
 491 Wingenund.
 492 The Partisan Spy.
 493 The Peon Prince.
 494 The Sea Captain.
 495 Graybeard.
 496 The Border Rivals.
 497 The Unknown.
 498 Sagamore of Saco.
 499 The King's Man.
 500 Afloat and Ashore.
 501 The Wrong Man.
 502 The Rangers of the
Mohawk.
 503 The Double Hero.
 504 Alice Wilde.
 505 Ruth Margerie.
 506 Privateer's Cruise.

The following will be issued in the order and on the dates indicated:

507—The Indian Queen. By Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. Ready January 3d.
 508—The Wrecker's Prize. By Henry J. Thomas. Ready January 17th.
 509—The Slave Sculptor. By William Jared Hall. Ready January 31st.
 510—The Backwoods Bride. By Mrs. M. V. Victor. Ready February 14th.
 511—Chip, the Cave Child. By Mrs. M. A. Denison. Ready February 28th.
 512—Bill Biddon, Trapper. By Edward S. Ellis. Ready March 14th.
 513—Outward Bound. By Roger Starbuck. Ready March 28th.
 514—East and West. By Mrs. F. F. Barrett. Ready April 11th.
 515—The Indian Princess. By Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. Ready April 25th.
 516—The Forest Spy. By Edward S. Ellis. Ready May 9th.
 517—Graylock, the Guide. By C. D. Clark. Ready May 23d.
 518—Off and On. By John S. Warner. Ready June 6th.
 519—Seth Jones. By Edward S. Ellis. Ready June 20th.

Published semi-monthly. For sale by all newsdealers; or sent post-paid: single numbers, ten cents; six months (13 Nos.) \$1.25; one year (26 Nos.) \$2.50.